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**AMONGST THE ARISTOCRACY
OF THE GHETTO**

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MISS ANNA BUNIN

Amongst the Aristocracy of the Ghetto

(Les nouveaux riches)

SKETCHES DRAWN FROM LIFE OF THE NEW-RICH

Amusing, entertaining, and lively
Full of fun, humour, and pathos

BY

ADOLPHUS RAYMOND AND MISS A. BUNIN

London :

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FINIS.

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CHAPTER ONE.

Confidential Chat between Mrs. Kratz and Mrs. Shwatz.

MRS. SHWATZ and Mrs. Kratz are two notable ladies, as they belong to our new aristocratic circle. Because they are rich and also because we shall meet these worthy ladies on more than one occasion during the course of our narrative, we shall introduce them to our readers at once and clear the ground as far as they are concerned. They are, as we have mentioned, rich, because the Lord was very gracious to them during the Great War and blessed them abundantly. Their sons, too, were very lucky during this eventful time, because they happened to be in Ireland and thus the horrors of War were spared them. Both our ladies live in higher quarters now, as it behoves their present position.

Yet, to their credit be it said, they have not severed their old connections with Petticoat Lane. Is it perhaps the force of habit, or is it their unchangeable appetite which the Lane alone can appease? Whatever the cause may be, here Mrs. Shwatz and Mrs. Kratz happened to meet in a train Eastward bound.

"If I am not mistaken," said Mrs. Kratz, "You are Mrs. Shwatz?" "Yes," she replied. "And you? Are you not Mrs. Kratz?" "Yes, I am."

MRS. KRATZ: "Where do you come from?"

MRS. SHWATZ: "From home, Holland Park."

MRS. KRATZ: "You live, then, in Holland Park?"

MRS. SHWATZ: "Why, all them blessed years; it'll be five years next month, please God."

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MRS. KRATZ : " So you don't live any more in Brick Lane ? "

MRS. SHWATZ (quite offended) : " I thought you knew it.

Don't you live any more in Commercial Road ? "

MRS. KRATZ : " Of course not, we bought a house in Shepherd's Bush."

MRS. SHWATZ : " What, Shepherd's Bush ! I wouldn't live there if you pay me. They say it is a little Jerusalem."

MRS. KRATZ (piqued) : " As for that, Holland Park ain't better. They say that all Whitechapel has moved there."

MRS. SHWATZ (a little subdued by this remark) : " Noo a metziah (bargain) where you live, as long as you're alive and well."

MRS. KRATZ (reconciled) : " You are right, by my life."

After a while, " Where are you going now ? "

MRS. SHWATZ : " I have to see my dressmaker, and she lives not far from Aldgate, so I will have a look in the Lane in the same time."

MRS. KRATZ : " In the Lane ? "

MRS. SHWATZ : " I wouldn't go extra, but since I ain't far from there ; not that you can't get everything where I live."

MRS. KRATZ : " Besides, it is not that alone ; you can bate in the Lane and get bargains."

MRS. SHWATZ : " But my husband, bless him, he likes Yiddisher things."

MRS. KRATZ : " You are right. I am sure you can't get them 'mongst the Goim (Gentiles), like salt herrings, Dutch cucumbers, horse-radish, and black olives."

MRS. SHWATZ : " And Haimisha fish " (fresh-water fish).

MRS. KRATZ : " My husband wouldn't touch any other on Shabbath."

MRS. SHWATZ : " And brown bread."

MRS. KRATZ : " My Benny, bless him, he loves brown bread. You remind me of brown bread as I passes the City. I shall also look up Wentworth Street."

A CONFIDENTIAL CHAT.

MRS. SHWATZ : " You mean to go to the Lane ? "

MRS. KRATZ : " Well, I am in the East End, I might as well. A 'alfpenny here, a 'alfpenny there, soon mounts up."

MRS. SHWATZ : " You are right ; while I am there I may have a look for a couple of fowls."

MRS. KRATZ : " By my blessed life, you are right. You don't know what to give them kids to eat."

MRS. SHWATZ : " I have not had a bit of butcher's meat for ten days."

MRS. KRATZ : " I also not. What has happened with the butchers now ? They should break their necks ; you can't get a bit of meat."

MRS. SHWATZ : " You are right. I have had to have fowls all the time. I don't mind for my husband and kids, but for the shicksas ! and fish so dear."

MRS. KRATZ : " Last week I stuffed a duck, and do you think the kids would touch it ? I had to throw half in the dust-bin. It cost me twenty-five shillings, so sure as I live."

MRS. SHWATZ : " I had the same thing last week with the fried plaice. The kids wouldn't touch it ; they wanted bananas with cream."

MRS. KRATZ : " I will try to get a bit of steak by mine old butcher in Spitalfields. If I pay a bit more, a metziah (bargain) as long as I get it."

MRS. SHWATZ : " My shicksa (Gentile servant) must have steak to all my troubles."

MRS. KRATZ : " You are right, they can eat something, them blessed shicksas, by my blessed life. And drink teal don't ask. If they would have as many fits as cups of tea they drink, they would all be dead long ago."

MRS. SHWATZ : " And how pa'tickler they are when you engage them. My shicksa wouldn't do the washing, no windows cleaning, no steps cleaning. I asked her whether she would like to play pianer. What do you think ?

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She couldn't see no joke in it, and said she will be pleased to play a little in the evening."

MRS. KRATZ: "Well, if that ain't the latest."

MRS. SHWATZ: "So sure that I be a mother to my kids."

MRS. KRATZ: "You say about the shicksas. You know how hard it is to get one. I have been without a shicksa for four blessed weeks and I worked like a brick mineself. At last with trouble I got a metziah. I must help her with all the work; if not, she can't get done. On Shabbath, I lets her finish the work and she was done at three o'clock. My sister-in-law sends in to ask me if I would lend her mine shicksa."

MRS. SHWATZ: "You don't mean it?"

MRS. KRATZ: "It's the truth, by my blessed life. She wanted her that she should take out her baby, as she saw she has nothing to do, she says."

MRS. SHWATZ: "I calls it ignorant."

MRS. KRATZ: "Selfish, I calls it."

MRS. SHWATZ: "That reminds me when I lived in the East End. I used to have a yockelta (charwoman) come and do my washing. Upstairs in my house there lived a 'greena' woman, just come from Poland. I sees her coming down with a bundle of washing and put it down near the Goie (Gentile). I asks her, 'For why do you do that?' She says, 'I gives it for the Goie to wash.' I was astounded and I says to her, 'But she ain't your yockelta!' She says, 'What do you lose by it? You pay her just the same for the day. Let her do my washing as well, a metziah; it will take her a little longer, and you don't pay her more for it.' How do you like that?"

MRS. KRATZ: "A d——n cheek, I calls it."

MRS. SHWATZ: "You are right, and what about the blessed washing? The laundries, what they don't lose they tear it for you, and the shicksas washing has a chain" (grace).

A CONFIDENTIAL CHAT.

MRS. KRATZ : " But they use enough soap for it; besides, I don't like them to wash at all."

MRS. SHWATZ : " Yes, you are right, as long as they are doing their bit of work; besides, you have to pet them sometimes, they are useful."

MRS. KRATZ : " You are right. They write an English address for you or read a bill now and again."

MRS. SHWATZ : " You are right there. You can't always get them kids to read them for you."

MRS. KRATZ : " My sister-in-law asked me for why don't I learn to write and read."

MRS. SHWATZ : " Who has time for that? With a large house to look after, the blessed kids and the shicksas; besides, I can't be bothered."

MRS. KRATZ : " My husband carries on a big business, unbeshroie (the evil eye be not upon him), and also doesn't know how to read and write; but for money you get everything—book-keepers, typewriters, etc."

MRS. SHWATZ : " You are right. Let our childrens learn."

MRS. KRATZ : " My Bertha learns pianer, recitation and dancing. I believe in giving childrens a good eddercation."

MRS. SHWATZ : " Yes, you are right, a girl must always have a good eddicashen. You never knows if she won't marry a high-class man."

MRS. KRATZ : " Oh! my Bertha, should live, has got already a young man. We helps him to study doctoring. My husband, bless him, says he can afford to pay for a doctor; it ain't a question of money."

MRS. SHWATZ : " It's a bit risky, as I knows of a case where they also paid for the study and he refused to marry the girl after he had finished doctoring. Take my advice and let her have a ready-made doctor—metziah for money; you can get plenty of them."

MRS. KRATZ : " What! My Bertha not lady-like? Why, you ought to see her. Last week we was at a dance,

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nobody wouldn't believe she was my daughter. Such a lady she is, such a good year on me. Why do you go to the dressmaker ? ”

MRS. SHWATZ : “ For a new robe for the ball.”

MRS. KRATZ : “ Which ball ? ”

MRS. SHWATZ : “ Mine husband joined a new union, the Freemason Club.”

MRS. KRATZ : “ You mean a Freemason Society ? We belong to it a long time. Yes, they are going to have a ball ; the annual ladies' ball. I am also going.”

MRS. SHWATZ : “ I asked my husband for why he wants to become a Freemason—a new business. He says, ‘Everybody is a Freemason.’ All the men in the Kosher restorants in the City where he has his dinners are Freemasons, so he also became one.”

MRS. KRATZ : “ Mine husband also joined for the same reason. I dare say it is in fashion.”

MRS. SHWATZ : “ What are the Freemasons ? Is it really something ? I asked mine husband and either he doesn't know what it is, or he doesn't want to tell me.”

MRS. KRATZ : “ I think it may be both. I asked mine husband and he said, ‘Women mustn't know about it, it is a secret.’ ”

MRS. SHWATZ : “ I can imagine what it is if a wife mustn't know about it. I dare say nothing good. My mother, bless her, she used to say, ‘Where there is a secret, there is something behind it.’ ”

MRS. KRATZ : “ Mine husband has a weak point. When he is tipsy he tells me everything, and if I couldn't get out anything of him, you may be sure there is nothing to hide.”

MRS. SHWATZ : “ But what I should like to know is, What is their purpose of going there ? I can't see any.”

MRS. KRATZ : “ What purpose do you want ? When they are not at business they play cards, and when they don't

play cards they go to the Freemason Lodging ; they have to go somewhere."

MRS. SHWATZ : " What then, like us women, always sticking at home with the blessed kids and the shicksas, eating our hearts out with aggravation."

MRS. KRATZ : " But they give us a ladies' ball ; I suppose to shut up our jaw."

MRS. SHWATZ : " You are right, I can see mine husband was never so forward to make me a new dress as this time for the ball."

MRS. KRATZ : " Why, my husband went to Paris on business and he brought me a grand gown all with silver embroidered. A surprise."

MRS. SHWATZ : " But something must be going on there. Are you sure there are only men and nothing else ? "

MRS. KRATZ : " I suppose so. You must believe it, since it is a secret."

MRS. SHWATZ : " Not that I am jealous."

MRS. KRATZ : " And if not Freemasons, can you trust them ? You know what men are ! "

MRS. SHWATZ : " You are right, but I can't see where it makes them cleverer. If he is a shlemil, he remains a shlemil, that's what I say."

MRS. KRATZ : " You are right. I am blessed if I know what they find in it. I believes it is an excuse for going away from home."

Here they arrived at the Bank and decided to walk to Aldgate.

MRS. SHWATZ : " I thinks Mrs. Blonder doesn't live happy with her husband."

MRS. KRATZ : " I also think she ain't happy, but how do you know ? "

MRS. SHWATZ : " Them couples that make too much love before the marriage always turn out like that."

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MRS. KRATZ : " You are right, I always says the same."

MRS. SHWATZ : " It is no good that you show that you love your husband too much."

MRS. KRATZ : " Not I, I'll show him too much love ! He'll wait a long time ! Is your dress nearly ready ? "

MRS. SHWATZ : " No, I am taking the trimmings to her."

MRS. KRATZ : " So you also bring your own trimmings ? "

MRS. SHWATZ : " I'll watch it she shouldn't get fat on me. I am an old fox."

MRS. KRATZ : " I should think so ! They rob you right enough. I know, I was working by a dressmaker."

MRS. SHWATZ : " They skin you with their prices."

MRS. KRATZ : " The sweaters, they should spend it on doctor's bills and medicine ! "

MRS. SHWATZ : " She made me my last dress ; she should have such a fit as it fitted me ! "

MRS. KRATZ : " Why do you go again to her ? "

MRS. SHWATZ : " Well, she understands a business ; she is sometimes a pal."

MRS. KRATZ : " I see you also know how to do the trick."

MRS. SHWATZ (confidently) : " Now my husband he is so eager for this ball dress, so I have given her the tip to put on half a fiver more on the bill " (with a wink).

MRS. KRATZ : " Serves him jolly well right ! Never mind, they will lose less money on cards."

MRS. SHWATZ : " I am sure."

MRS. KRATZ : " I was last week by Mrs. Trower for a card party. All she gave us was salmon sandwiches. Why the 'bus fare was more worth than what she gave us to eat."

MRS. SHWATZ : " I saw her last week in Whitechapel outside the Pavilion Theatre with a basket buying oranges, apples, nuts, and bananas."

MRS. KRATZ : " Why, was she going to make a party ? "

MRS. SHWATZ : " No, she told me that, with her husband and kids, she was going to the play, so she takes it with her."

MRS. KRATZ : " When I, with mine husband, goes to the Jewish play, we take a box."

MRS. SHWATZ : " What, with fruit ? "

MRS. KRATZ : " No, a box from where we look down when they play."

MRS. SHWATZ : " Yes, we take it together with our partner. It comes cheaper."

MRS. KRATZ : " And it looks richer."

MRS. SHWATZ : " And you can make yourself at home."

MRS. KRATZ : " You are right. That is what I says."

MRS. SHWATZ : " What is with Moskovitch ? I hear that he has gone away in the West End, to the goishka (gentile) play to make fun of the Jews."

MRS. KRATZ : " What you mean ? "

MRS. SHWATZ : " He plays something, a new piece. Shylock or Shinglock, I knows much, and there he laughs from the Jews and makes with the hand."

MRS. KRATZ : " Oh, I knows. My Bertha says that it ain't his fault, but the man who wrote it. They say that because Moskovitch is a Jew he knows how to play it better."

MRS. SHWATZ : " The man who wrote it must have been an Anti-Semite."

MRS. KRATZ : " No, Bertha said his name was Sheksper ; he is dead."

MRS. SCHWATZ : " A good job too, that should be the end of all the people who hate the Jews."

They arrived in Aldgate and there they were swallowed up by a throng of people in Petticoat Lane.

CHAPTER TWO.

The Ladies of the Ghetto are Forming a Charity Society ; How it Ends.

MRS. PAISTERMAN was in a charitable mood. She felt that there was something to be done somewhere, but she was not quite clear about it in her mind. She reflected. . . She was doing her bit now and again, but not the thing she wanted. She wanted to do something praiseworthy, "the real thing"—that which would give her a name, which would distinguish her from amongst her friends ; she was thirsting for fame and honour—she wished to become a President.

Although her husband belonged to various little societies, being on the Committee of some of them, Mrs. Paisterman was desirous of something higher than this—she wished to preside. But how ? Where ? That was the question.

"Let me see !" . . . She reminded herself of a certain case which had been brought to her notice a few months ago, about assisting in marrying a poor Jewish orphan girl, a needy case she was then told. She took no particular notice of same at that time. Now, she thought, that very case was a real godsend to help her in her scheme.

She spoke to her husband about it one evening, and he agreed that it was a Mitzwah.* "Besides," he remarked in his usual jocular way, "the women won't miss the few pounds, and it will keep them busy for some time." "But," said Mrs. Paisterman, "I wish to be President, since it is my case and I promote it. I wish that it should be under my leadership."

Mr. Paisterman laughed. "I can see that women have long hair and short sense. You are not businesslike at all.

* A charitable deed.

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Now, there is Mrs. Falk, who is well known for her vanity ; I am sure that she would certainly support this case most generously if you flatter her with the honour of making her President. Mrs. Trooper, give her the pleasure of writing, make her Secretary. Mrs. Lieroff, who likes to show off, make her Treasurer. Get Mrs. Schwatz to count the money," he said with a twinkle in his eye. " This I would do if I wanted to make it a success." " Still," said Mrs. Paisterman, " I think I ought to be President." " But," Mr. Paisterman interrupted her, " you are a child. Can't you see that you are having the chief Mitzwah and honour. Since you are the originator, and allow the meetings to take place in our house, then you have achieved what you want." But this was not Mrs. Paisterman's plan. Still, she yielded, thinking to herself, " After all, he is right. It is I who will bestow the Presidency and the various offices—therein lies some honour and distinction." And this satisfied her to a certain extent. . . " They will see how unselfish I am—and this alone is worth something."

So she decided to send out invitations to most of her friends, not forgetting Mihma* Esther, who, she thought, would certainly consider her action a most laudable one. " Miss Brunin and her cousin must not be left out ; they are educated young ladies and they will certainly think better of us."

The date and place were duly stated, as well as the purpose.

This afternoon the meeting takes place. There are already many ladies present, but many are expected to arrive—Mrs. Trooper, Mihma Esther, Mrs. Patking, and several others.

" I say, what was the matter with Mrs. Goldstone and Mrs. Lieroff ? " asked Mrs. Trooper. " I heard that they had a row at Mrs. Creepinger's tea-party." " I can quite

* Auntie.

imagine when these two let their tongues go," remarked Mrs. Patking, "they are like poisonous arrows. I would not like to be pricked by them," she added, shuddering. "They have been on strained terms for some time. What else could have been the reason? Of course to show off. I dare say one wanted to outdo the other."

"Is Mrs. Goldstone coming?" inquired Mrs. Trooper. "I hope so," Mrs. Paisterman replied. "I can't stick that woman," said Mrs. Trooper, "with her eternal nerves and her husband's bragging. He thinks that he is the only one who possesses silver knives and forks; and she with her fabulous doctors' bills. I am sure she ought to feel as bad as I do sometimes; then she would know what it means to be really ill." "What is the matter with her nerves?" asked Mrs. Patking. "Oh, she simply can afford to be ill," sneered Mrs. Trooper, "more fuss than anything else; besides, she seems to be never happy unless she talks about her illness and the money she spends on it. I bet you," she said, amidst the laughter of the ladies, "that she unearthed a new doctor from somewhere."

Mrs. Goldstone was announced. Our hostess went out to greet her. They were all glad to see her. They asked her how she was feeling. She was kissed by Mrs. Trooper, and Mrs. Patking did likewise. They said that they were wondering how she was and trusted that she is feeling better now.

"How shall I feel?" she asked in her turn, with a shrug of her shoulders. "When do I feel well? We was to-day to consult a big physician doctor B.C. of the London Hospital, who lives in Harley Street. I dare say you have heard of him?" The ladies said that they had heard of him, although it was not true, but they did not like to admit their ignorance of such a famous physician.

"Well, what did he advise?" asked Mrs. Paisterman. . .
 "Rest, no aggravation," said Mrs. Goldstone. "Well, how

can you manage that ? ” she asked, “ with such a big house as mine, unbeshroie,* with the blessed shicksas.”† “ You are right,” they all agreed. “ Is Mrs. Millstein coming ? ” inquired Mrs. Goldstone. “ Yes, I think she is, but not so soon,” Mrs. Trooper informed them. “ Her shicksa told me that she went to her dressmakers about her last dress she had made—and a nice thing she did with it, just like her ! ” “ What is it ? ” several voices asked.

“ She kept the dress several months without paying for it,” said Mrs. Trooper. “ She wore it many times and took it back, and told the dressmaker that it wasn’t the same style which she had chosen, and she made her remodel the dress. The poor dressmaker cried when she told me about it.” “ Then she had two fashions out of the same dress,” said Mrs. Patking. “ A bit priggish, but a clever idea,” she laughed.

“ Still, it is a shame,” remarked several voices. “ This is nasty of her, and, considering that she was a dressmaker’s hand herself before she married,” remarked our hostess, “ it seems when slaves become the masters——” “ You are right,” said Mrs. Patking. “ What is their business ? ” asked Mrs. Trooper. “ Something in the tin and enamel ware line,” Mrs. Goldstone informed them.

“ They haven’t half made the pot the last few years,” remarked Mrs. Patking. “ I know it, they lived next door to me in Hove last year. Mr. Millstein, he used to come in to my card parties and he did play at high stakes. You ought to see *her* diamonds.”

“ Mrs. Millstein ! ” the maid announced. She was greeted very cordially by all the ladies. She excused herself for being late, as she had to be at the dressmakers ; she was having a new dress made for Mr. Froemberg’s Bris.‡

* They should not get the evil eye. † Gentile servants.

‡ Circumcision.

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Mrs. Trooper and Mrs. Patking were exchanging looks behind her back. "Yes, what do you say, fancy a boy after seven years! I dare say it is going to be a grand affair. They moved into a new house, so they will have two occasions at once, two birds in one catch." They all laughed.

Several more ladies arrived. Our hostess seemed to be annoyed, as nearly everyone was present except Mrs. Falk. They would have had tea without her, but the hostess was afraid to offend her, as she had accepted the Presidency.

"What's the matter with Mrs. Falk, she is so late?" inquired Mrs. Trooper. "She generally comes late to give herself importance. I know her, it's all done for swank, as if she has anybody to keep her at home—no kids, her husband away all day, two shicksas to command about."

"Who is to keep her busy? Her little dog?" They laughed. "Yes, and what do you say to the way she speaks about the beast?" said Mrs. Patking, "it made me crack for laughter. I saw her the other day with a bottle of medicine and she looked quite worried. I asked the reason, and she told me that her little darling Winnie was ill. I thought it was her sister's kid. She said, 'No, my little dog!'" They all burst out laughing.

"Why, don't you remember," said Mrs. Goldstone, "when her last dog died, she was so upset that the doctor ordered her away to the seaside?"

"She is potty, I think," remarked Mrs. Millstein. "What! A calef (dog)?" asked Mihma Esther in surprise. "I never have heard of such a thing before, by my life—and a Yiddisha woman, too. You know what our Holy Books say? 'He who brings up a calef is the same as if he brings up a swine,' and you know what that means?" "It would be better if she would look after her poor cousin, who is a widow with two children," said Mrs. Millstein. "Fancy a dog!" "Them sort of people don't give no 'nedoowahs' (charity) when they don't have black in white

in the *Jewish Chronicklech* (*Jewish Chronicle*). I know them high-class womans with the dogs. You can write books abaht them," continued Mrs. Shwatz. "I remember, some years ago, I lived in a house where next door lived a grand madam; she always went out with a calef under each arm, as if one ain't enough.

"I never didn't see her with her kid in the street, it ain't fashionable I s'pose. For the kid she kept two nurses. When I used to come on a Thursday from the Lane with fowls, you ought to see the redickless look she gave me. I dare say she thought I was common-looking, but I thought to mineself, it ain't more redickless than your two dogs; besides it was food for Sabbath for mine husband and family. What you say to that?" "Of course you are right," said our hostess, who also kept a dog. "I keep it for the kids mostly." Mrs. Trooper looked a little uncomfortable, as she, too, was to be seen with a spaniel, but it wasn't for love of it, rather for fashion. She preferred to keep silent.

"I feel never at ease when I expect her visit," remarked Mrs. Trooper, "she always looks for faults. I always do the dusting myself on that day"—she laughed. "Yes, she does like to criticize," remarked our hostess. "Once she came up and somehow managed to look into the bathroom. 'I am surprised you should have no geezer,' she said, 'why my geezer costs me a fortune, you ought to come and see it.'"

"That just reminds me," said Mrs. Patking. "You know the Landros? It will make you scream what I am going to tell you. They had a spare room and made a bathroom out of it, and they had a geezer put in there and I dare say that it costed them a good bit more than they expected. You know how they can brag? Everybody they met, they were telling the expensive news. The old man carried on alarmingly, but the youngsters they didn't care. So what do you think the old woman did?" "Had a good wash,"

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interrupted Mrs. Trooper, "she needed it badly." There was a general outburst of laughter.

"Not her," said Mrs. Patking. "They have a large family, ever so many cousins, so she asked them all to come and have a bath for threepence, which is cheaper than the Public Baths, and she had her expenses returned and a good bit more. Well, that's what I call business." Mrs. Trooper looked through the window and exclaimed, "Her ladyship is coming!" There was a knock at the door; Mrs. Falk had arrived.

The hostess went out to greet her. Mrs. Falk excused herself for being late. "Oh, don't mention it," said our hostess, "we didn't mind a bit." Her little boy Henry was standing near his mother to receive the guests and looked up surprised at her. "Why, mummy, you said she kept us waiting with tea, didn't you mummy?" Our hostess looked confused. She pinched the boy and pushed him into the kitchen. Mrs. Falk made a face as if she did not hear it and they walked into the room.

They all received her with friendly smiles, especially Mrs. Trooper, who wished to know how she was, and they sat down to their tea.

After having had some tea, Mrs. Falk said, "I must excuse myself for being late, I must tell you the reason. I was just going out of my house when I met a clergyman coming along." They all looked interested. "Well, yes?" Mrs. Trooper inquired. "Well I do believe firmly," continued Mrs. Falk, "that whenever I go out and I meet a clergyman, I will meet with a disappointment, and therefore I always go back to the house and sit down for a while." Mrs. Patking smiled sarcastically and Mrs. Trooper said that she knew it to be the case when meeting a man with a wooden leg. Mrs. Goldstone assured them of it when meeting a black man. Mrs. Paisterman again told them that when she dreams of a black cat she knows she will have

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a quarrel. "With me it is different," said Mrs. Millstein, "when I upset the salt, I know I will have a quarrel."

Mrs. Falk was not pleased with the turn of the conversation and said, "I know it to be a fact, that whenever I meet a clergyman, I shall meet with a disappointment. Now I will prove it by an incident which happened to me."

"Once, my husband sent me two tickets for one guinea each to hear Tetrazini, and I should meet him at the Hall. As I went off the 'bus who should I meet? A clergyman! I knew at once that I will be crossed somehow, and I was very much upset about it and I threw away the 'bus tickets in a temper." The ladies became interested in the affair. "Now you can imagine my aggravation," Mrs. Falk continued, "when I comes to the theatre, I finds that I threw away the theatre tickets in my temper instead of the 'bus tickets. Well, and what do you say to that?" she asked them. They were convinced.

"Well," said Mihma Esther, "I says that when a Yiddisha woman goes out in the street, she ought to wear an apron under her dress. That keeps the Evil One away and acts like a charm for many things." The ladies took mental note of it. "Besides," continued Mihma Esther, "I should like to know how many of you kiss the Mezuzah before leaving home, and if you would, I am sure nothing bad would happen to you." The ladies looked guilty.

After tea they went into the drawing room, where a cheerful fire was burning, and they sat down for the day's business, to discuss the charity fund and the girl.

"I am glad to see," commenced Mihma Esther, "that Jewish women come together not to talk about fashions and dresses, or to talk about one another and shicksas (servants), but for a real good Mitzwah. Let me tell you that it is not an ordinary Mitzwah; in fact, two of the greatest Mitzwahs, the studying of the Law and the 'Levaiah' (accompanying the dead) may be interrupted for the Mitzwah to lead a

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bride under the canopy—this our Rabbies say in the Gemara," she concluded. Here Mrs. Falk took up the word and said, "I always respond in cases of this kind with all my heart. I consider this the greatest of my duties and I am really much obliged to Mrs. Paisterman to afford me another opportunity to be able to contribute to such a charitable cause. I am sure that we all are indebted to Mrs. Paisterman for this occasion and at the same time I can't help admiring her, how very unselfish she is. She takes all the trouble and yet leaves all the honours to others. But Mrs. Paisterman is the hostess and we her guests, so it is our duty to comply with her desire. I gladly accept the Presidency, since she wishes it." "I am really glad you have accepted to be President," assured her Mrs. Paisterman, "not only to please me, but also to please all the ladies present."

Mrs. Falk bowed and said, "Now I should like to know who is our protégée? She is, as I am informed, an orphan and undoubtedly a most deserving case, but as President I should like to know more about the case. Here is not a question of money, but it is my principle." "Is she a kosher Yiddisha daughter?" Mihma Esther wished to know. "I assure you," said Mrs. Paisterman, "if I knew there is something wrong about her, I should most decidedly have nothing to do with it. I know that she is an orphan, her name is Bertha Flaxer, her parents are dead, she is all alone. Her parents were not poor and she was the only child, so they didn't teach her a trade or profession, and now she is left to struggle along as well as she can." "Oi vai mir!" sympathized Mihma Esther. "A Mitzwah! a great Rachmoness (compassion)! poor Yessoimah (orphan)." "If so," remarked Mrs. Falk, "it is a deserving case, and I head the prescription list with £5 5s." She said this slowly, looking round triumphantly to see the impression her generous offer would make on the ladies, and she was satisfied with the result.

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Mrs. Trooper that very moment was mocking in a whisper to Mrs. Goldstone about "prescription list," but turned pale when she heard the sum. She had only intended to contribute 10s., and now she was in a dilemma, as were most of the ladies present; they were similarly placed. Mrs. Falk sat down, when Miss Brunin and Miss Lehrer were announced. They were shown into the drawing room, where they were greeted cordially by our ladies.

Miss Brunin excused herself for being late. As she was a medical student and she was doing at that moment her course in midwifery, she had to assist a doctor with midwifery cases that afternoon, as it was her turn to visit a confinement, a most distressing case. The ladies asked her to tell them all about it. They were interested.

"We were called," said Miss Brunin, "to a case, and the doctor and myself found one of the saddest cases imaginable. It was in one of the side streets of the poorest parts of the slums, and we were led into a small, dismal, grateless and fireless room devoid of any furniture, cold, and no light except a small candle burning in a broken bottle, and there we found a young, worried, and pale looking woman, covered up with some rags, attended by a poor old Christian woman, who told us that this young woman came to her house three days ago and rented the room. Early this morning she heard screams. She ran into the room and found the poor young woman in a pool of blood, the child already born, and that is how she was lying. She pointed to the woman. 'I have been trying to do what I can to keep her warm, it seems she was not prepared yet, as she has not a thing for the confinement. I gave her whatever I could spare, but I am only a poor woman,' said the old Christian woman."

"Was it a Christian woman?" asked several voices, and Mrs. Paisterman had tears in her eyes. "No!" said Miss Brunin, "that is the reason I wish to appeal to you,

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she is a Jewish woman" "How terrible! shocking! poor woman! nebech (alas)!" were the exclamations of the ladies. "A Jewess! very sad . . . Who is she? has she any relations? friends?" all the ladies asked sympathetically. "That is just the sadness of it all," said Miss Brunin, "I found out that she is a poor, lonely, forsaken single woman—a girl!" But Miss Brunin stopped suddenly as she looked at the changed attitude of the ladies. "Oh, a girl," laughed Mrs. Trooper ironically, "serves her right!" "A girl!" they all repeated in a disappointed voice. "A Metziah!*" remarked Mrs. Patking with contempt, "where is the sad case?" "I thought it was a married woman," said our hostess in a reproachful voice.

"A girl!" echoed Mihma Esther, "a mamser (illegitimate)! Good God deliver us from evil." Our hostess seeing how upset Miss Brunin looked thought it was right to ask her the name of the girl. Miss Brunin looked very serious and said, "I am sorry you take it in that light. I am sure I did not expect it of you ladies. The name of the poor sufferer is Bertha Flaxer." . . . If a torpedo would explode in their midst, the result would not be more terrific. "Who?" they asked in one voice, as if bitten by a snake. "Why!" said Mrs. Falk, turning to our hostess in an offended tone, "that is the name of the girl you told us just now. How is that, I should like to know?" "Bertha Flaxer!" they all repeated in pitched voices, "what a shame, well if that ain't killing!"

Our hostess turned crimson with indignation. "It isn't my fault I am sure, I thought her a respectable girl. How shall we trust anybody now, I am blessed if I know." "A mamser!"† repeated Mrs. Trooper, who seemed to enjoy herself that evening, "and perhaps from a Yock‡ in the bargain!" "I thought there was something wrong about

* Idiomatically, it is nothing, or a bargain. † Bastard.

‡ Gentile, or non-Jew.

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it from the beginning," said Mrs. Falk, "I knew I would be disappointed. Didn't I say," she looked round with a beaming face, "I met a clergyman? And you see I was right." The ladies were looking at her with awe and admiration. "Well!" she continued, "I am glad that it turned up in good time before I gave my money." They all seemed to feel relieved. "We also," was the chorus of the ladies. "For such an underserving case, no fear, not me," said Mrs. Trooper. "Yes, this will be a lesson for me," said our hostess, who seemed very angry.

Miss Brunin looked from one to the other. She was puzzled and upset at the unexpected result her news had on the ladies.

"May I know what is going on here?" she inquired of Mrs. Paisterman. "Surely, I thought you with your sympathetic heart would at least listen more to what I have to say." "I know enough," retorted our hostess in a temper, "what business have I with such a girl?" "But why are you all so against her?" asked Miss Brunin. "You want to know why?" said Mrs. Paisterman. "This is the girl on whose behalf we came together and she has put me to shame, and all of us." "Oh!" said Miss Brunin, "now I understand. Is this the poor girl you mentioned to me five months ago?" "It wasn't five months ago," said Mrs. Paisterman angrily. "I believe that I am correct," again said Miss Brunin quietly. "Had you not delayed in your good intention the girl might have been married now and spared all her shame, pain and misery."

"You seem still to sympathize with her," said Mrs. Trooper with a sneer. "But why not? You all seemed to be moved when I told you about it," answered Miss Brunin. "Oh! we thought it was a respectably married woman," said Mrs. Patking. "Where is the difference?" asked Miss Brunin. "Why should you deny your sympathy where it is due? The only misfortune is that the girl has no

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mother, she had no one to whom to confide her troubles. And I know of many cases which happen daily in quite respectable families, especially during this terrible war . . . Ladies, consider it, do not be so hard on one who needs your help. Is she not enough punished already ? ” she tried to soften them. “ How can you,” said our hostess, “ ask respectably married women to take an interest in such a case ? There are special societies for such ones.” Miss Brunin looked at her and said, “ What has that to do with whether you are married or not ? It is to the goodness of your heart I am appealing.” “ What, me goodness of heart ! ” remarked Mihma Esther. “ When you read the Holy Books you will see what must be done with such a woman. The Holy Law says ‘ she must be stoned till she dies.’ That’s what I think is prop’ly done. It is for such bad womans that little childrens are dying and for such one’s sin womans in co’fnement die,” she concluded with a sigh. “ This kind don’t die in confinement you bet,” said Mrs. Trooper, “ such ones seem to have all the luck.”

Mrs. Falk turned to Miss Brunin and addressed to her the following words : “ Young lady,” she said in a warning tone, “ take my advice, don’t play with fire. You’re a single woman, don’t meddle in such affairs. Drop it, listen to me, I mean it good with you. He who plays with fire, burns the fingers.”

Here Miss Brunin got up and said, “ Ladies ! I cannot believe that you are of her own sex. All I can hear is that you have nothing to say in her defence. You seem to think that because she has fallen, it is your duty to push her down still more. You all are ready to condemn her without having heard her. How unjust ! How do you know that she was the sinner ? Perhaps she was more sinned against. And what about the man ? May he go unpunished ? Must she alone bear all the shame and be regarded as an outcast even by her own sex, whilst he snaps his fingers, and you

even regard him as a hero, and none of our worthiest ladies will consider it beneath their dignity to marry their daughter to him. You will perhaps think him a charming man, especially if he be of a wealthy family and a member of a synagogue. You may brush away his criminality and may overlook his treachery and call it the folly of youth, or the sowing of wild oats of youth. . . . "

Here Mrs. Trooper interrupted her mockingly. " Ah, I can see, you are against men. Votes for women, eh ? " They all burst out laughing. " A suffragitka," remarked Mihma Esther, and they laughed again. " Wait," said Mrs. Trooper, " there are already ladies as magistrates, they will help you to wage war against men."

Miss Brunin took no notice of these remarks and continued in her appeal. " Ladies ! remember you are sitting here as self-made judges condemning a poor fallen girl without knowing the other side of the story. Remember ! she is an orphan, she has no mother's hand to guide her and no father to protect her. You ladies may think yourselves personally safely landed, but think of it. You have children, girls, one never knows what may happen. We are all in God's hands. You may be able to protect them in your lifetime, but . . ." They all jumped up and remained speechless.

Here Miss Lehrer stood up and looked quite indignant. " Ladies ! " she said, " it is true I am only a girl. It does not seem right that I should discuss such a case. As a Jewess, I have heard so much of the goodness of the Jewish heart, of Jewish Rachmonus (compassion). Where is it ? Compare yourselves with that poor, ignorant, and benighted Christian woman ; before her lies prostrated a poor, fallen, homeless, motherless creature—a Jewess, in pain, agony, fear and despair, helpless and hopeless—did she enter into the question as regards her race, religion, or of the legality of the child ? I say no ! She saw only human suffering and

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as such she gave her all the assistance and sympathy she was capable of. And you ! sisters of this poor girl, of the same race and religion, you are rich, prosperous ; you are living in abundance and luxury, you aristocratic ladies ; take a lesson from that poor woman, who, instead of condemning, showed compassion and pity. If she is wrong, then I side with her. It seems to me that the same sun that softens wax hardens clay."

She was silent. These few simple words spoken with such audacity by Miss Lehrer had thrown the whole company into consternation. But for some time everybody was silent.

The door opened and Mr. Paisterman came in with a jolly face. " Good evening, ladies ! I envy you, you are looking such a happy company. A real pleasure to see you all so quiet and serious ! I hurried home," he continued, " to be just in time to ask you to contribute something towards buying some winter garments for our worthy Rabbi. It is so cold, and the poor man is shivering, so don't disappoint me," he asked, with a merry twinkle in his eyes.

Miss Brunin and Miss Lehrer were getting ready to leave the place when Mr. Paisterman turned towards them. " What's the matter ? " he asked them, " do I frighten you away ? Stay ! have some supper." " No, thank you ! " they replied, and went away.

The ladies still remained quiet for some minutes, then they began asking one another : " What do you say to that ? They have thrown insults and scorn in our faces." " They have behaved themselves with the greatest contempt towards us," said Mrs. Trooper in a rage. " This insolent behaviour is unpardonable," said Mrs. Falk.

" The girls are wrong," said Mihma Esther, " but they are good. They have a good heart, but their heart is in the wrong place. I think they have been carried away for what they believe is a good cause. They meant it good, but they

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act wrongly. And who knows," she added thoughtfully, "if it isn't after all better to err on the side of mercy."

Mr. Paisterman looked in amazement from one to the other and listened bewildered to the babel of tongues. "May I know what it is all about?" he asked of our hostess. "Oh, leave me alone! Don't ask no questions," she said impatiently.

And thus ends the charity society for marrying off a poor orphan girl.

CHAPTER THREE.

A Sabbath Evening Card Party.

Mr. and Mrs. Patking were having their usual Saturday evening party. Saturday evening is unlike any other evening, being between holyday and workday. It is a cross-breed, in which both are merged, giving it a charm all of its own.

For centuries it has been customary for Jews the world over to bid farewell to the Sabbath: terminating as it does at Saturday sunset—farewell to the Bride, who, on Friday eve, had been welcomed in with the sweet song, "Come, my beloved to meet the bride, the presence of the Sabbath."

Among orthodox Jews it is the source of gathering spiritual strength for the coming week, when the daily greeting of "Good evening" is changed to a "I wish you a good week." It is a semi-holiday, passed in leisure and enjoyment. The family and its friends gather together and pass the hours telling of the saintly Rabbies, the Tsadikim, their wondrous deeds, their revelations, and the great feats performed by them, and of the martyrs dying for their religion. So they find edification, and strengthen each other in their faith.

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Together let us go to the house of Mrs. Patking, one of the *nouveaux riches*, who, this Saturday evening, has round her a similar gathering.

The drawing-room, large and richly furnished, is the favourite resort of the ladies and some of the younger men. Tables laden with refreshments, liqueurs, fruits, stand in a corner. In a second room are card tables for the men and those of the ladies who wish to play. Card playing is a necessity at gatherings such as this, and beginning generally for amusement, invariably grows serious, ending in heavy stakes and great gain and loss. To-night, however, the company seems in no serious mood. Play is moderate and all engage in joking at the others' expense, relating all manner of tales and savoury anecdotes, vulgar, suggestive, of highly sensual character, and enjoyed particularly by the ladies.

"Well, this is a bargain!" exclaims one, and all burst out laughing. "It's an excellent story, but peppery rather."

"You remind me of that Chassid with his bargain," said Mr. Levy. "Only this time his lady is not mentioned." (A Chassid, it must be known, is a member of a fanatically pious sect.)

"The Chassid chanced to commit himself—the story is rather an ugly one—and, being brought before the authorities, was ordered forty strokes unless within three days he could clear himself—which, I may tell you, he couldn't. He ran to his Rabbi for help, adding, having put his case, 'And the worst of it is, the executioner is a Jew.' 'Well,' said the Rabbi, 'that very fact may be to your advantage.' 'How, Master?' 'My dear son,' answered he, 'you know that a Jew likes to strike a bargain. This you must manage for yourself.'

"The Chassid took the hint and went off to the executioner. 'I am in for trouble,' he said. 'Now listen, you are a Jew and so am I; let us strike a bargain.' 'No,' said the other, 'there can be no question of bargaining.'

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This is serious and I must do my duty.' The poor Chassid tried by any means to overcome the executioner's scruples, until after great trouble his compromise was accepted.

" 'Suppose,' said he, 'you pretend to strike me and all the while strike the air?' 'Very well, but I must have ten florins for each stroke, and I think that's a bargain.'

" 'Robbery!' cried the Chassid. 'That means four hundred florins!' 'Well,' and the other shrugged his shoulders, 'it's either your blood or your money.' He consented. 'But,' warned the executioner, 'mind you don't give the game away. You must yell for all you're worth when I pretend to strike. Remember!'

"On the appointed date all happened as arranged. The Chassid yelled lustily each time the cat swung. But suddenly he gave a piercing scream, rending the heart. When he could recover he turned to the executioner in a rage. 'What made you do that?' 'Ah! I gave you that last one just to let you see what a bargain you had made.'"

The company laughed. "Not a bad bargain," one said, "but I know of another case. A well-known Rabbi, who had a large following of Chassidim, lived in a townlet in Poland belonging to a noble. The latter was visited by a second noble, and together they sat down to cards. Being short of ready cash, they played for their belongings. One said he had hounds. The other said that unfortunately he had only Chassidim. So they staked one dog for one Chassid, till it was discovered that the dogs were running short.

" 'Very well, then,' said the host, 'I will let you have two Chassidim for one dog.' " "A fine joke, as I'm a Jew!" exclaimed Mr. Patking, laughing. "But not half so nice a bargain as I know."

"It is a clever story of a Rabbi, who lived in a townlet near Vilna. There was a young woman who had been labouring for several days, until, alarmed, her husband went to the Rabbi for help.

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"The latter, as usual, promised to pray, and then gave him a charm in the form of ten kopecks (2½d.). These were blessed and were to be placed in a small bag on the woman's navel.

"The husband did as he was bidden, and in due course the woman gave birth to a very healthy boy. The Chassid was amazed. 'Master,' he said to the Rabbi, 'in what consisted the power of the remedy?' 'Well,' explained the Rabbi, 'you know how we Jews are fond of money. I knew that as soon as the youngster would scent the coins, he would come out of his own accord. And so he did!'"

They all laughed, and Mr. Paisterman took up the thread of conversation. "I, too, know a story of a Rabbi." They all looked up, knowing him to be a Chassid, and wondering what he would say.

"It so happened that a very learned Rabbi was one of a company. One of his opponents, wishing to annoy him, addressed him as follows: 'Rabbi, I have a serious question to ask. In the Holy Books we are told that when we find ourselves in the presence of a Rabbi we must stand up. We are also told that when we find ourselves in the presence of an aggressive dog, we must remain seated. Now, Rabbi, what is one to do when one meets them both together?'"

"Immediately the Rabbi answered. 'You are right, my son, it is a difficult question. My advice would be that we should both leave the place, in order not to embarrass the company.'"

"A good job," commented Mr. Patking. "It served him right. He should not be such a rascal."

"I know a similar story," said another, himself the son of a Chassid. "A Chassid, walking along the street, was accosted by a tipsy junker. 'Itzik!' he cried. 'I know of a town where a Jew and a pig are on the same level.' The Chassid bowed humbly. 'Baron,' said he, 'let us go there and see if it is so!'"

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"What do you say about Sroolnick's daughter?" said Mr. Falk. "We were there last week for a circumcision party." "How is it?" somebody asked. "The baby must be a premature one." "Oh, no!" said Mr. Falk. "It is strong and healthy enough." "But surely it can't be a full-time child." remarked Mr. Patking. "They are only six month married."

"Oh, yes!" rejoined Mr. Falk. "The baby is in the right time enough. The marriage was not!"

There was general laughter, and a winking. "Which reminds me of that woman," said Mr. Levy. "She was in certain circumstances which surprised many people, her husband having been away in America for the previous three years. 'How could it happen,' she was asked, 'since your husband has been away so long?' 'A good year be on you!' she answered good humouredly. 'Why, doesn't he write letters to me?'"

"Have you heard this one though? A provincial Chassid, unused to the ways of large cities, had cause one day to visit Vienna. Arriving at an hotel he was asked the usual question, 'Do you want half a bed or a whole bed?' Astonished, he replied, 'Why, of course I want a whole bed! Half would not be safe to be in.' After supper he retired to his room, and having completed the lengthy evening prayers, disrobed and approached the bed. He recoiled horrified and, raging, rang the bell, bringing the waiter hurriedly back. 'What does this mean?' stormed the Chassid. 'How does she come here?' 'Oh, sir,' stammered the frightened waiter, 'there must be some misunderstanding. I thought you asked for a whole bed. If you don't want her, she will go.' 'Never mind her,' answered the Chassid. 'If she's here let her remain. But what I want to know is, how does she come here? How does she come here?'"

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The company became livelier, their anecdotes more spicy, the jokes more vulgar. We therefore invite our readers into the drawing-room.

"What do you say happened to Sadie Marcus?" said a young woman who was sitting with some of the company in the adjoining room, which opened by folding doors. They all looked in her direction expecting to hear some news. "You know," she said, "that she was engaged to be married to Mannie Levinsky." "Yes," said Mrs. Kratz, "I have been at the engagement party. It was kept in the New King's Hall, Commercial Road, and a very smart affair it was." "Yes," said the young lady, "and it cost them a fortune. Now I hear that he is going to marry a rich girl from Manchester." "What a shame!" exclaimed Minnie Levi, a bright girl of seventeen years of age and the daughter of Mrs. Levi. "Pity poor Sadie." "But let us hear all about it," several eager voices asked.

"Well," said the young lady, "he gave her some nice presents, a fur coat and jewellery, so he used a trick. One day he came and said, 'You know, Sadie, I saw a lovely coat up West in a window, and I should like to have yours remodelled after the same style.' She went with him, saw the coat and liked the model, so in the evening he took the coat. A few days later they went for a walk, and he stopped with her at a jeweller's window and admired the settings of the stones on some rings. He told her that he would like to have a stone reset on one ring and a new single stone for the other one.

"The girl was pleased, so they went together to his jeweller, a friend of his."

"What a shame!" said Minnie Levi again. Here Mrs. Kratz interrupted quite indignantly. "What do you mean by shame? Business is business. What has that to do with the jeweller?" It was her husband. The people looked at her and understood.

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"Well, what happened?" asked Minnie.

"So," continued the young lady, "the jewellery, too, was taken from her and he gradually left off coming to the house."

"I thought they made too grand an affair for the engagement party, a hall with a grand dinner. It was ridiculous; one never knows whether there will be a marriage to follow."

"I am sorry for her," repeated Minnie, who was for rights for women, and very forward in ideas for her religious parents. "Didn't she take up a breach of promise action? I should."

"Jews don't like to go to the Public Court," said Jenny Myers, "they mostly go to the Beth Din (Jewish Court) and there they are only in honour bound. But they seldom take it serious."

"I see," said Minnie. "That is the reason why we hear so little of Jewish happenings in the Court. . . The girl is ashamed and they all try to keep it amongst themselves. No, I wouldn't," said Minnie, "I should go to an English judge and make the young man pay."

Mrs. Levi seemed to be pleased. She liked her boldness, but was displeased because she criticized the Jewish Beth Din. "Minnie," she reproved her daughter, "what do you know about it? It is quite right; it is much better Yiddisha people should make it up amongst themselves and not go to the goishka (Gentile) Courts. For why? I should sooner listen to the judgment of a Rabbi. He understands these Jewish dinim (laws) better."

"But?" said Minnie, "what is the good of it, going there when it is not taken seriously. A kind of a farce, I call it."

"Still," said Joe Myers, brother of Jenny, "—not that I wish to take his part or defend him; he acted like a cad, there is no mistake about that—there is also another side of the story."

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"What is it?" asked Minnie.

"Do you remember," said he, "the case of Wolfe Levinsky, his cousin, the fancy cabinet-maker? He was engaged to Cissie Goldman. She was a nice looking girl, tall, with a fine complexion. Their fathers were good friends and he wished very much that they should be nearer related to one another. Wolfe liked the girl's appearance and did not mind his father's suggestions to become engaged to her. Now he was a very smart fellow, rather refined, with a secondary education, quite a gent. He found out subsequently that, although the girl was nice looking, she was without education or accomplishments. She could write and read and that was all.

"He never could speak to her of anything he read of interest. He first got curious over her musical attainments. Whenever he came to see her, they used to sit in the drawing-room. She generally opened the piano, started to play a certain tune, played up to a certain point, when her mother would call her down.

"One day she opened the piano again, played that particular tune, the beginning of a certain piece, and stopped at her usual terminus, waiting. . .

"Well, dear! Can't you play any further?"

"His words seemed to have irritated her, and in a temper she started the same thing over again most violently, and stopped again at the usual spot where the mother as a rule called her downstairs, but this time her mother was out and was unable to interrupt at the appointed note. The girl saw that the game was giving way. . .

"At first she became ashamed and afterwards infuriated. She lost her temper, took the ring which he gave her, and held it under his nose, and said in a loud voice, 'Get away with it! I am sick of it all. I ain't a anniversary lady with high-class eddication what is fit for you. I am sick of it, I tell you, with your politeness, calling dad pater, and mum

mater. Them high-class words I hate them, I got enough of it—if I don't suit you, you can hop it!—and out she went, banging the door and left him sitting there."

"How funny!" said Minnie, who seemed to have enjoyed the whole affair. "Of course one could see that she had only good looks, but apart from that she was an uneducated, vulgar girl. She was really not for him."

"But this is not the end," said Joe. "He didn't seem to be sorry of it, but he wanted his remaining presents returned, so he went to the Court."

"The girl said that she considered the gifts as presents and refused to return them."

"How is it," asked the Judge, "the young lady here asserts that the articles in question were presents from you, and now you ask for their return?"

"No, your honour," said Levinski, "it was not a present according to the Jewish custom. We give no presents. When a Jew gives his fiancée or wife a present, it does not mean that he gives it to her to be her property—it belongs to him—he only gives it to her to wear."

"You mean to say," remarked the Judge, "that when a Jew gives his future wife a present, she has no right to regard it as her own and dispose of it in her own way?"

"No," said Mr. Levinsky, "we give our presents with ideas to marry, and when we marry it is common property, and so remains in the family. As a matter of fact, the jewellery was an heirloom of my mother, which again she received from her mother."

"The Judge took a different view of the matter, and poor Levinsky had to wipe his mouth and be satisfied with the loss of the trinkets rather than remain with the bargain."

"That reminds me of Rachel Kolinsky. If you remember she went to South Africa a few years ago," said Mrs. Kratz. "I remember her," said Jenny Myers. "Her match went off with Harry Goldstein." "Just so," said

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Mrs. Kratz, "but with her it was a different thing. Her father wanted to be too clever, and he who digs a grave for the other, falls into it himself."

"Please tell us about it!" they eagerly asked, expecting a good story at somebody else's expense.

"You know Ezra, the Scripture reader," began Mrs. Kratz. "He is, nebech (alas), a good, pious, God-fearing Jew and doesn't understand Yiddisher swindle. His wife is a respectable Jewish woman, never misses a Shabbath in Synagogue; she is very religious and does a lot of charity. Since she is poor and can't afford to give her own money, she goes to other people and collects money for such needy things as to assist to marry a poor Jewish orphan, for the Hebrew School, the Jewish Hospital, a poor confined woman who is in need of help, for the Jewish Nurses' Home, and more of them charitable things besides . . ."

"But, Mrs. Kratz, excuse me, what about Rachel Kolinsky's match?" interrupted Minnie Levi.

"Yes," continued Mrs. Kratz. "Ezra, her husband, who does them things more for a Mizwah, is often rewarded in this world for it. Occasionally, amongst other deeds, he brings about a Shidduch* in order that the Scripture should be fulfilled, 'Be fruitful and multiply,' and they turned out heavenly blessings. He knew Mr. Kolinsky from home (Russia) and he knew also the father of a young man with whom he went to school together in Poland.

"This young man attended the same Synagogue with him and was a good sample, both as a good Jew and a business man." "You mean example, Mrs. Kratz," explained Minnie.

"Don't indiaraupt a person when they speak, Minnie," reproved Mrs. Levi. "Interrupt! Mother," said Minnie. "Oh! shut up," said Mrs. Levi impatiently. "So," continued Mrs. Kratz, "Mr. Ezra, who never shrinks from

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a good, profitable deed, put the matter in movement, visited one and spoke to the other. He never minded the trouble nor the time. There was appointments to keep, to introduce them to one another—it was not an easy thing to do, but he succeeded. It was decided, since the girl and the young man liked one another, that the engagement should take place on Purim (when the Jews were delivered from the accursed Haman, through Queen Esther). In the meantime Kolinsky, who was very glad that the daughter has made such a golden Shidduch, was sorry that Mr. Ezra will have to be paid a good bit of commission money from both sides. He came upon an idea. He should save both him and the young man a nice few pounds.

“One day Mr. Kolinsky met his future son-in-law in his house and started a conversation with him. ‘You know,’ he said, ‘that nothing is done in this world without the will of God the Almighty, and you know how our holy religion teaches us that when a male child is born the counterpart is already created for him, no matter the difference of age or how far they are from one another, when the time comes. He, blessed be His Name, acts in such a way that they must meet and be re-united in one. “And they shall be one flesh,” as in the Scripture by Adam and Eve. Now, as you can see,’ said Kolinsky, ‘with or without the help of Mr. Ezra, you belong to each other.’

“‘Mr. Ezra was only a willing instrument in the hands of God the Almighty, and for this he will certainly be rewarded. Now to come to our business,’ went on Kolinsky. ‘I must think more about you as my future son-in-law and my daughter than of that Shlimmazel (simpleton) Ezra.

“‘Ten pounds is ten pounds; that is what he expects of both of us, and I am sure that you children could do better with the ten pounds when we consider how much the wedding will cost us.’

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“ ‘What do you suggest?’ asked the young man. ‘Well,’ said Mr. Kolinsky, ‘since you ain’t engaged to my daughter officially yet, we will say to Ezra, for some reason or other, that the affair has fallen through. What will in the future be, let God Almighty take care of it, but in the meantime we must get rid of his claim.’

“ ‘But, Mr. Kolinsky,’ interjected the young man, ‘but . . .’

“ ‘There are no buts,’ interrupted Mr. Kolinsky, ‘but listen to an older person. We can arrange our own affair without the help of a third party.’

“ The young man didn’t like the whole business, but he submitted. I don’t know for why.

“ Poor Ezra was informed by Kolinsky that the girl doesn’t want the young man, for reasons best known to himself. Reb. Ezra was very grieved over it, particularly for the young man, and in order not to hurt his feelings didn’t ask the reason, neither didn’t he mention about it. In short, he, by a stroke of luck, found a very nice young lady in every way more accomplished than Rachel, and as chance wanted it they was from the same town. He knewed her parents, who lives now in Wales, and they were engaged on the same Purim. That’s for why it went off!”

“ Well,” said Joe Myers, “I don’t blame the chap. It was rather decent of him not to wish to do the old boy in.”

“ It was very nice of him, by gum! I am sorry, though, for the girl,” said Minnie Levi. “If it were not through her father’s treacherous ways, she might have been a happily married woman by now. My opinion is that parents ought not to interfere at all. Besides, the Shadchen (match-maker) is much too old-fashioned and out of place. I shall watch there is no Shadchen in my future affairs, you bet.” The younger folk were rather amused with little Minnie’s strong views on match-making, except Mrs. Kratz, who

sniffed a bit and murmured something about young shrimps knowing better.

Mrs. Levi also did not approve of her daughter's views, and remarked what the world has come to ! The chicks learn the hens ! " Yes, them young girls are different than in our times. We was not the same as is now. It was our parents what did for us them things ; we had nothing to say about."

" Still," said Joe, " surely you had a right to decide your future life, by Gad ! " " What future, when future ? " said Mrs. Levi. " When fader said so it is, so it had to be. I knows about mineself."

" Oh, do tell us something about it, Mrs. Levi. It is so interesting to hear how matches were made up years ago." Mrs. Levi began :

" We lived in a village near Mlava. My father was a butcher who used to go there for meat every week. I remember I be a girl about fifteen years old and used to help mother, bless her, in the house, not like them girls to-day, helpless and have everything to their nose. So, one day, father comes home—God rest his soul—and looks very happy. I sees mother and him talking and looking at me. After dinner they called me, stroked mine head and gave a pinch in mine cheek, and said, ' Mazol Tov (good luck), mine daughter. You are a Caleh (bride) allright.' When fader says a bride, I was a bride. I only turned red. I be a bit ashamed, I s'pose, but asks no questions.

" We was brought up like that. I trusted mine parents, and I knows they will find what is best for me. In mine times, the parents didn't talk about the Shidduch with the young ones ; they used to make it up, the parents, amongst themselves. The fathers used to find out the family yichus (pedigree), whether the young man is respectable and from (religious), and the dowry ; and when everything is satisfactory they tell us that the wedding is in three months' time."

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"Fancy!" ejaculated Minnie, "not to know, even not to see, your future husband—what a bit of fun! You catch me doing that, my word!" The company laughed, while Minnie continued: "Suppose, mother, he would be deformed or as ugly as Punch, or even a hunchback? I should like to see what eyes you could have made to behold such a monster." "Well, my girl," answered the mother, "we didn't marry at that time to have a husband for show. 'Spose I look ugly or deformed, what then? It was our good luck that we both looked handsome kids; in fact, mine husband was struck with mine beauty, especially as I was dressed. I wore all the jewellery he made me presents of and many others of mine family.

"I was smothered in gold and silver and diamonds, like Queen Esther, and, thank God, I have nothing to grumble if it was not for them blessed cards," pointing to the card players. "Mine daughter shouldn't have a worse one!"

"Dad is all right," said Minnie. "But I think that to-day he would also like to see his bride before he marries."

"Surely, Mrs. Levi," said Joe, "were you not at all curious to see you boy?"

Mrs. Levi laughed merrily. "Well, I must confess that. When mine chosan (bridegroom) came with his relations three days before the wedding, he stayed with mine uncle. I watched him the following day, when he went with the people to Shool to pray. I don't know whether he saw me or not, but I was pleased to see that he was a good-looking young boyela. I was really pleased."

"I should think so!" said Minnie, glancing at Joe.

"Well, I have heard a good story what my uncle used to tell us, a story about a match which took place in his town, somewhere in Russia."

"Tell us, please," they all asked.

Just then Mrs. Patking came in and invited them into the dining-room for supper, wherein they all went chatting gaily.

CHAPTER FOUR.

Genealogy of Reb. Zalman and Reb. Calman.

AFTER supper they returned to the drawing-room, and conversations began anew, whilst the card company resumed their interrupted play.

"Joe!" said Minnie, "what about your uncle's good story? Out with it; it must be great."

"Oh, yes! Mr. Myers, let us hear it," they all asked. To which Joe complied readily.

"Yes!" he began, "the old chap used to enjoy telling it to us over and over again. It was, according to him, a true story, how parents made up a match to their own satisfaction.

"There lived in his town a Jew—'Zalman the Rich' they used to call him.

"He used to do business with the Polish poritz (nobleman) whose right hand he seems to have been. His business was to go about and buy everything for the Count's household, as they never occupied themselves with anything of the kind; they left it all to Reb. Zalman.

"Once, on one of his journeys, he came to some town near Kovno. In the hotel where he stayed he met another Jew, also a traveller like himself. Mr. Zalman was sitting at a table, enjoying a pipe after supper, when the other man came in and sat near him. They looked at one another. 'Sholem Aleichem' (Peace be with you), said the new-comer. 'Aleichem Sholem,' answered Reb. Zalman. They were quiet for a moment, then Reb. Zalman asked, 'From where comes a Jew?' 'I come from B——,' the other answered. 'Where do you come from?' he asked in his

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turn. 'I come from S——,' said Reb. Zalman, 'and where do you go? What is your name, your business?' 'I go to Kovno on business. I am a dealer in flour, my name is Calman Leib Selinger. And you? Where do you go? What is your business?' 'I go to L——. I am going there for the Poritz, to buy horses for his new carriage.' Here they asked the hotel owner to bring them two glasses of brandy. After wishing each other 'Lechaim' (to your life) they drank the brandy." "But, don't you think," Minnie interrupted, "that they were very inquisitive? Fancy asking all those private questions!"

"Not at all," said Mrs. Levi. "A Jew, bless him, likes to make of everything a business. He knows when he will ask, p'raps he will get to know something to the advantage of both." "But don't they get offended?" Minnie asked again. "Not a bit," said Mrs. Levi. "A new idea! One Jew with another doesn't get offended, they are all like brothers, they all do the same." "Well! what about the story, Joe?" Minnie asked again.

"After that," began Joe, "Reb. Zalman asked of Reb. Calman Leib, 'Who was your father, your grandfather, your great-grandfather? Are you connected with a well-known Rabbi?' 'My father,' said Reb. Calman Leib, 'was Reb. Yossel, the Scribe, who was the son of Reb. Sorech, who rented the farm and brewery of the Count Rostoski, and my great-grandfather was the son of that famous Scribe, Reb. Nosen, who has written a book about "Balam's Talking Ass."'

"Reb. Zalman the Rich seemed to be pleased. 'And who is your family from your mother's side?' 'My mother's grandmother was the step-sister of the famous Rabbi, Reb. Baruch Borrower, he should rest in peace.' Reb. Zalman was delighted. He stretched out his hand and said, 'If that's the case then we are related.' Reb. Calman was also pleased, grasped his hand and shook it vigorously.

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'So am I,' he said. 'Two glasses of brandy!' he called out. 'How are we related?' asked Reb. Calman. 'Why,' said Reb. Zalman, 'my father's grandfather was a second cousin to Reb. Rabbi Baruch, he should rest in peace.' They were both very pleased and finished the second glass of brandy. After a while, having puffed away at their pipes, Reb. Zalman asked, 'Have you any children?' 'Eight, they should all remain alive! My oldest is sixteen years. And you, Reb. Zalman, have you any children?' 'Seven, bless 'em,' answered Reb. Zalman, 'the oldest is seventeen years.'

" 'Wouldn't it be a good business we should become nearer related,' asked Reb. Calman, 'since our Yichus (merit of good genealogy) is the same?' 'God is with you, of course! A capital idea; it's a godsend, as I am a Jew,' answered Reb. Zalman. 'What do you give nadan (dowry)?' 'I give,' said Reb. Calman, slowly stroking his beard, 'a nanny goat, three years' food and lodging free, and one hundred roubles cash, money on the table.' He looked at Reb. Zalman and was satisfied at the result of his offer.

" 'I,' said Reb. Zalman, 'give a calf, five years' food and lodging free, and one hundred and fifty roubles nadan.' They clasped hands again; they were already in an elated mood, as the result of the incident and the two glasses of brandy—which were not of the size of the liqueur glasses, either, my uncle said. They asked for another lot, drank it, and wished Mazol Tov (good luck) and arranged that the following week they would meet to write the engagement contract. They went to their rooms, as by the time they had finished their glass of brandy they were at their wit's end how to keep awake, and they both dreamed peacefully about their mutual grandsire, the famous Rabbi Baruch Borrower," continued Joe. "On the following morning they parted with good wishes and arranged for the meeting. They both in their turn informed their wives of the happy

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event and the subsequent match, and all parties were satisfied and ready for the Tenaim to be written.

"A week later, Reb. Zalman came to Reb. Calman regarding writing the Tenaim. He asked about the Chosan (bridegroom). 'Is he well learned in the Talmud? How many pages of the Gemara does he know by heart? I wish to examine him . . .' but stopped suddenly, seeing Reb. Zalman's astonished face. 'What is it?' he asked. 'What Chosan?' asked Reb. Zalman, in his turn. 'I have no Chosan. I have the Caleh (bride).'

"Here Reb. Calman looked perplexed. 'Caleh? Don't jest, Reb. Zalman, it is I who have the Caleh!' 'You?' Reb. Zalman fell down on his chair.

"It followed, after an explanation, that they were so pleased and satisfied with the family pedigree and being related to the same famous Rabbi—and, I dare say, my uncle added, the brandy played its share in the discussion—that they actually forgot to ask the sex of the prospective couple who turned out to be both girls. That's what my uncle used to tell us," concluded Joe, amidst the outburst of laughter from the whole company, which actually made the card-playing men look up from their cards for a moment.

"How awfully funny!" said Minnie, rippling. "Its killing me!" "Well," said Mrs. Levi, who had been laughing heartily at Joe's story, "it ain't as bad as that. Of course, things are different now; you can't make your boys and girls do as you like, but I think it is much better than your developments, them running-away marriages I mean. The bargain, they have to run away for it! As if there is not plenty of time for trouble. Them bits of boys and girls, they know much! They go to them registing offices and then they have to stick to one another whether they like it or not. Do they know how to sew on a button? All they know is to powder their noses and to polish their nails, and the boys backing horses. She ain't the proper

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wife and he ain't the proper husband. In Russia, when they are not happy, we Jews can at least get a divorce, but in England it is a misfortune."

"Now I understand why Mrs. Rosen's sister objected to marrying in a registry office," remarked one of the young ladies. "But hers was a different affair. She got acquainted with a nice young man of whom it was said that he sometimes suffered with fits. The mother was a very clever woman from the Ukraine and insisted that they should not get married in a registry office, which she said was in itself most objectionable. She regarded it as a real abomination and she wouldn't consider the children lawfully married.

"She also objected to their marrying in a modern Synagogue, because, as in the Registry Office, she said that they are knotted together and they cannot be divorced then. 'For why!' she argued, 'if the husband is really afflicted with such a disease, she will have to stick to him all her life and she will never be able to marry again.' They married as they do in Russia. A little bit of an obscure Rabbi, not recognized by the United Synagogue, and in the presence of nine other Jews, which makes the Quorum, he married them on the quiet.

"He was really suffering from fits," continued the young lady, "and she was very frightened to live with him. She wished to be divorced, but he wouldn't hear anything about it. They gave him no peace and she went back to her mother. He saw that it wouldn't do, so he asked for £60 to be set free."

"What a bit of fun," said Minnie. "No, it was no fun for them," said the young lady. "They refused; but finally, after a good bit of bargaining on both sides, he did get £12 and a ticket for America for his generosity."

"Now I can see that the mother was a clever woman," said Mrs. Levi. "Yes," said Mrs. Harris, "this licetence business is a real misfortune. It sticks to you; it is like a

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hump on your back ; once there it must always remain. But sometimes it turns out to be a blessing." " In which way ? " asked the young lady. " I knows of a case not far from us. They are a poor but respectable family. One of their girls is seventeen years old, and, like all them young girls, was running out and about in the evenings. The mother never knew where she went ; how can a mother know ? She used to come home late—it is a misfortune with them girls—and one day the mother found out when it was too late. The sorrow and the aggrevation of that poor woman, nebech (alas), is also quite impossible to describe. She lived in a thickly populated street off the Commercial Road and her shame and disgrace was terrible. She was a simple, good old-fashioned woman and didn't dream that to her child will happen such a thing, and she was in despair.

" She started questioning the girl and found out that she goes out with a bit of a boy of eighteen years of age, without a fixed occupation ; the only boy of a widow. Now here was a misfortune. She runs away to the ladies who have a society for protection of Jewish girls and women. She takes the girl with her and it was the president who had it out of her who the boy was. She wouldn't tell the mother. The secretary sent for the fellow and asked him all about it. He didn't deny it, but he said he ain't in a position to marry. They argued with him the seriousness of the affair, but him, he couldn't see it in the same light—obstinate !

" ' It doesn't matter a bit,' he said. ' I know lots of girls who don't get married to the boys and are afterwards just as before and nobody ain't the wiser a bit, and such a thing ain't nothing new.'

" Still they succeeded, with a lot of trouble, he should come the following day and they will get registered.

" The same evening up he comes to the girl's home and tells her father he has changed his mind. He ain't going to get married.

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"The poor father, a good, simple Jewish man, who didn't understand any of them things, said to him, 'You act like a murderer! What right had you to outrage my child? What right had you to ruin a girl's future—especially a Yiddisher girl—without intention to marry her?' 'It ain't my fault,' said the feller, 'she is to blame, she used to run after me. Ask my pals; they know it.'

"You can imagine the shame and consternation of the father. It was a *chorban* (destruction) on his years—and he went away. The neighbours, especially one of them, a vulgar, wicked woman, they say, with a past of her own, used to jeer at the poor mother about the daughter's condition with the . . ." "Yes," interrupted Mrs. Levi, "it is always the wicked women who thinks that people forget about their past, and throw stones at the unfortunate ones."

"Yes," said Mrs. Harris. "The poor mother used to go into the house and cry and ask God for why he punished her like that. He knows her trouble and He should take her part." "I would rather summons her, the hag," interrupted Minnie. "That would soon shut her up." Most of them laughed, but they were interested, and urged Mrs. Harris to continue.

"The father was so angry with the feller's wickedness that he said he doesn't want to hear about him; he only hoped that the child wouldn't live to be an everlasting shame to itself and a blot to the family. 'Heaven forbid,' said the mother. 'We must see to marry them and give the father to the child.' In the meantime, the life of the poor girl, who was a mere child, was real hell; she loved the boy but couldn't hide her shame, nor neither could she defend him.

"On the following day he didn't turn up. The poor mother ran about to look for him, asked his pals, and at last they found him. They was sorry for the mother and prevailed on him that he should at least be registered on the quiet, and by so doing her parents will be satisfied, and

they would not trouble him any more about it. They told him that doesn't mean that he is married according to the Yiddisher law, and yet they will leave him alone with the marriage after that. When they asked him about it, he would be able to defend himself with the licence. They brought him to the registering office and there he said to the mother, "I don't mind to be registred with your daughter, but I am not going to have a Yiddisher wedding. My father should turn in his grave. No fear, not me!"

"The poor parents amongst themselves decided that the confinement shouldn't take place at home, for a hundred and one reasons, so that I advised them to go to the infamily (infirmary) not to arouse the attention of the neighbours, and the poor mother cried bitterly, nebech, her child should be confined amongst strangers, and not even Yidden (Jews).

"She was afraid the child may be a boy, and what about the Bris (circumcision)? One day I met the mother and asked her what about her daughter, is she married?

"'What do I know?' she says. Then she took out of her pocket a paper and said, 'Here is the patent what they gave me at the registering office. Can they sit on this paper?' she asked me.

"What did they mean by 'sit on the paper?'" asked Minnie.

"They mean living together as husband and wife," explained Mrs. Harris.

"How awfully funny they are at expressin' themselves!" said Minnie.

"So," continued Mrs. Harris, "she asked me what she must do now; is that everything? I looked at the paper and couldn't help smiling at the woman's simplicity, and I said to her. 'Wai mir! this is not a patent. It is a cerstifficate that you daughter was duly married to the young man, understand it well, by licence.' The poor woman couldn't grasp it, and she looked bewildered. 'But it 'mounts to

the same, that she will sit with him on licence, but she ain't married, the licence may go out and they may not want to renew it, as my husband had it last year with his. What then ?'

" ' That is a different licence,' I said. ' This one makes them husband and wife.'

" ' How is that ? ' she asked, astounded, ' when they ain't married ? '

" ' But they are,' I said. ' But not by the Yiddisher law,' I said to her. ' Yidden must not marry without them licence.'

" ' But there is another misfortune,' said she, ' we ain't seen him since the day he left the registering office. He said he may be registred, but he ain't going to marry her. If he earns something, he'll rather give it to his mother.'

" ' My son pointed out to him,' says she, ' that he is married and he must support his wife ; but he wouldn't see the point.'

" I advised her to wait till she was confined, and then, I says, this very bit of paper will make him support her. ' Really ? ' she asked in surprise, ' how wonderful ! '

" I met her a few weeks after, and she shows me a letter from the poor girl, nebech, from the infamily (infirmiry). She wrote that she gave birth to a child, and that she has had a very shocking time and that she nearly was dead, but a little better now, and would the mother soften her heart towards her and come to see her. She went for the feller to tell him the news, but she couldn't find him. She asked his pals, and they went together to the place where they knew he was. No sooner she sees him, she says, ' Mazol Tov to you, my son, you are a father,' and she showed him the letter.

" ' If you like you can come with me,' she says. ' No ! I shall go mineself,' says he. The following day, him and his pals goes up to the infamily. He asked the porter whether Lily Neller was confined to-day. The porter says, ' We

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ain't got nobody as has the name of Neller here, but Mrs. Lily Saken was confined yesterday'; and he asked the feller, 'Who be you?'

" 'Well,' he answered, 'I am Jack Saken, I suppose its mine wife if that's the case.' The porter looked at him a bit curious, so all them pals corroborated that he be the proper husband of Lily Saken, they all knows it, that he is the father.

" Off he went in the ward. The poor creature, who was weak and pale, nodded to him to come nearer. 'I am going to present you our dear little girl, she is exactly like you,' she says in a soft voice.

" 'Why,' he says, 'I thought it was a boy, I don't want no girls!' and he left her without saying another word.

" Three days later they carried her out of the infamily to the Beth Alom (cemetery). It made an end of all her troubles."

The listeners, as well as Mrs. Harris, were all moved by the sad end of the poor little girl and they remained silent for some time.

CHAPTER FIVE.

Master Cecil Creepinger's Birthday.

MASTER CECIL CREEPINGER, the only son of Mr. Creepinger, skin merchant, celebrates his eleventh birthday, in honour of which Mrs. Creepinger is giving a tea party to thirty children from "up the other end." Great excitement prevails. Master Cecil had been making heavy bets on the presents. He staked six bars of Nestlè's chocolate to nine of his sister Gertie's that Dave Lieroff, the grandson of Mrs. Laichter, would give him a present similar to the toy aeroplane Dave had received on his birthday.

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Gertie said he would not, because "mummy says they are as stingy as their gran'ma. I bet you she won't let him spend so much money!" "I think they will," said Beatie, the younger sister. "I heard Auntie Sally say to mummie that the Lieroffs do like to show off." And so it went on till the birthday arrived.

Master Cecil looked smart in his new sporting jacket and Eton collar, with his hands free of ink spots. The girls were dressed in white frocks, all lace and frills, with shoes and stockings to match. They were at present busy tasting the forbidden fruits on the table in the drawing-room, decorated for the occasion.

The first visitor to arrive was Mrs. Schwartz with her three younger children. Mrs. Millstein followed with her three eldest ones, then Mrs. Goldstone with her four, "bless 'em!" They were all smartly attired; all the girls had jewels on, rings, bracelets, etc., and they each brought a parcel with them which was handed over to Master Cecil, who could hardly restrain his curiosity regarding the contents, and immediately satisfied it. By the expression on his face, one could see the value he attached to them. But all this was of little consequence. The question was of Dave. Would he reciprocate? For it meant to him six bars of chocolate, and he knew by experience that "that saucy cat Gertie" would make him pay.

He now felt misgivings, after what his sister had told him.

"That rotten kid—couldn't he crop up earlier, and me waiting here all the time!" "Don't worry," teased Gertie, "the chocs. are as good as mine." "And I don't think!" he said. At last Mrs. Laichter, with her daughter Mrs. Becky Lieroff and her only son Master Davela (should live!), arrived. Davela was a pretty boy of seven years with the face of a cherub, and he was dressed in black velvet with lace collar and cuffs. The children ran to meet him, but

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had to wait until the ladies finished their greetings. Then Davela handed to Master Cecil a tiny box. Poor Cecil, his heart sank within him, and Gertie—she was triumphant. They quickly opened the box and found a fountain pen inside. Cecil was disgusted. “Rotten!” he exclaimed, “who wants that beastly pen?” “It may improve your handwriting, and your teacher will be grateful,” suggested Gertie in a mocking tone.

“Shut up, you cat!” Cecil was angry. “Watch your own handwriting. It looks more like sticks and birds than letters.”

Gertie pinched him and told him it “served him jolly well right.”

After the greetings were over, all the ladies, with some of the children, went into the drawing-room, whilst the rest of the children were left to amuse themselves in their own way, with the help of chocolates and fruit. “I expect Mihma Esther. She promised to come,” said Mrs. Creepinger. “Oh, did she? I shall be pleased to see her; she is an awfully dear old lady,” remarked Mrs. Millstein.

“She is very froom, and she is an ornament at any party, I think,” said Mrs. Creepinger. “Yes, she likes to come to us. She was at my place last Passover,” said Mrs. Goldstone with much emphasis, “and you know what that means? Mihma Esther does not go everywhere on a Passover.” “I have heard of her,” said Mrs. Schwatz. “I also expect Miss Brunin, who promised to come.” “Who is Miss Brunin?” asked Mrs. Schwatz. “She is a very nice girl,” said Mrs. Goldstone. “She was formerly a nurse at the London Hospital.” “I am not very fond of her,” said Mrs. Lieroff. “I cannot exactly say that I do not like her,” said Mrs. Millstein, “but I have watched her lately, and notice that she speaks very little and observes everything. I believe we are a kind of study to her.” “And I am under the impression,” said Mrs. Goldstone, “that

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she has an utter contempt for all of us." "I think you are right," remarked another lady. "I am also under the impression that we appear to her altogether ridiculous." "But you must admit," said Mrs. Millstein, "that she has the tact not to show it. But, somehow, you feel it." "Don't be so hard on the poor girl," said Mrs. Creepinger. "It is her nature not to be forward amongst married ladies. Besides, what can she speak to us as a girl . . . about husbands, children, shicksas, or illness? I am sure," added Mrs. Creepinger, the hostess, "that if we speak about anatomy or any of her lectures she will soon find herself and talk." "Well," said Mrs. Millstein, "perhaps she studies us to gather experience, because she won't always remain single, I hope." "Yes," said Mrs. Lieroff, "she gathers experience, I dare say, to describe us and make a laughing-stock of us." Mihma Esther arrived.

Mihma Esther entered and was greeted by the ladies. She asked for the boy, and Master Cecil came in a little sulky; he had not yet got over his disappointment about the fountain pen. "A fine boy, unbeshroie!" said Mihma Esther. "On you Bar Mitzwah,* please God!" "Please God," all the ladies echoed. She handed over to Cecil a small prayer book and told him she hoped he would become a good Jew. Meantime, Miss Brunin arrived, excusing herself and hoping she had not put them to any inconvenience. She brought a box containing instruments for geometrical drawing.

The tables were laid for tea and the guests took their various seats with the children.

There was excitement and chattering and asking of questions as to where they should sit, until at last they all settled down to the very important business of having tea. In the meantime, some of the ladies were continuing a conversation at one end of the table which seemed to be

* Confirmations.

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very animated, and the subject of great importance, namely, "Mr. Patking, the jeweller, has bought his wife a motor car." "And what do you say to her?" continued Mrs. Lieroff, "you'd think goodness knows who it is when she drives along the road. What is she doing this for after all? To show off before the neighbours. It is being said of her that she doesn't walk any more."

"Yes," said Miss Colman, a young lady already past her 'teens, "anybody could have had such a lucky match if they had wished to. A Metziah! I had the opportunity some time ago to marry a rich widower with five little monkeys in the bargain, but no thank you. I declined it quickly—plenty of time for such a bargain." "You must be an old maid then," remarked Gertie, the eldest daughter of our hostess, "because gran'ma said you was thirty years old five years ago, and if you keep on picking and choosing, she said that you will wait till the Messiah comes."

Mrs. Creepinger was looking very uncomfortable, and the company, with the exception of a few, seemed rather amused. "These blessed kids!" exclaimed Mrs. Creepinger angrily, getting up from her chair, and going over to Gertie she smacked her. "I have often told you to hold your tongue when you are not spoken to." "But, mummy dear," cried Gertie, "gran'ma did say it." "If you say another word," interrupted Mrs. Creepinger, "you will have your tea with the shicksa in the kitchen."

"Her and Dolly Crackle," began Mrs. Lieroff anew, "were thick pals soon after they both got married, but now you ought to hear what Dolly says about her, and Mrs. Patking about Dolly; and yet they go out together and speak about others." "After all," said Miss Colman, "why did she marry him? For his five kids? The money! Money walks and money talks." "Money may talk," remarked another lady, "but it doesn't walk any more. It buys motor cars." They laughed.

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Mrs. Lieroff was bursting with impatience, and she began again. "I was rolling with laughter the other day, when Dolly took her off, how, when she was there once for tea, Mrs. Patking received an anonymous begging letter from the East End. She was addressed as 'most noble lady,' 'charitable lady,' and 'great lady' several times. She showed Dolly the letter, saying, while pretending to be amused, 'What do you think of this letter? By Jove, this woman knew to whom to write!' Dolly could see how flattered she felt. 'Why, for each time,' Mrs. Patking said, 'that she calls me noble lady she deserves 5s.,' and she actually sent 5s." The company were amused. The children, who were seated near their mothers, were told to behave themselves and not touch anything without first asking for it.

"I do believe in bringing up children properly," our hostess informed her visitors. "I told you not to go with your hands over other people's plates." She spoke to her son, our hero of the day, but that gentleman did not take a bit of notice. "Take you hands off that plate or I will smack you! Oh, he'll kill me, that's what he will, that blessed kid," sighed his mother. "And it's not for want of smacks, I assure you," she informed the ladies. "Wait till your father comes home," threatened Mrs. Creepinger. "What is the matter with Dolly," our hostess asked of Mrs. Lieroff, "that she is so hot against Mrs. Patking?" "Don't you understand?" said that lady. "Envy! She was a rich girl and the other poor; now the other is richer than her and even possesses a motor car, whilst Dolly doesn't."

"Want more cake, Davela?" asked Mrs. Laichter of her grandson. "Let him have bread and butter, mother," Mrs. Lieroff advised. "He has had enough cake. Mother, bless her, always stuffs him with cake." "That's for why I like grandma better than you," remarked little Davela.

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Mrs. Laichter was pleased with her grandson, and said, "A long life to him. He'll grow up to be a great man and clever." "Clever! that ain't the word," exclaimed Mrs. Lieroff. "He is a terror, that's what he is. Talk about having one kid—he is harder to manage than a dozen of them, I assure you.

"At any rate," she concluded, "he costs me as much, bless him." "If children cost something—you tell me!" said Mrs. Shwatz. "You have one; what abaht six, unbeshroie? Why, bless them, when you start buying them things now it is shocking, and I got them used to the very best, no matter what I pays, as long as I gives them what they want." "A Yiddisha mother should live!" said Mihma Esther. "You are right," said Mrs. Creepinger, in her turn. "Why, fruit alone for them costs me a fortune. Who talks about food? I gives them the best of everything and yet look how skinny they look, one would think I starve them."

"Yes," said Mrs. Laichter, "let them eat and be well. Who grudges them! Don't you think, Miss Brunin, that food is better than medicine?"

"Yes," answered Miss Brunin. "Food, when taken in proper time, and moderately, prevents the frequent use of medicine." "What time? Who talks about time!" asked Mrs. Laichter. "Give them plenty, whenever they want it, that's what I say." "Well," said Miss Brunin, "I must admit that Jewish mothers do not underfeed their children; they rather overfeed them, which is just as bad." Davela was following the conversation quite knowingly and thought it time to air his opinion on the subject. He said, "When I want something and mum doesn't want to give me, I cry so long till I get it." Mrs. Lieroff, with some of the other ladies, were laughing, and his fond mother asked, "Well, have you ever seen such an old head in all your life? He does say some old-fashioned things, that kid. What do you

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think he said the other day? My neighbour, who is kind enough to visit me whenever she likes . . . ” “ And she looks in all the corners ! ” reminded her Davela. “ Sha ! Sha ! Davela,” said Mrs. Laichter. “ Well, yes,” said Mrs. Lieroff, “ bless him, everything he remembers. I must say it is true. It is not always pleasant, but what can one do ? ” “ But you take off the fruit from the table when you hear her coming,” Davela obliged her again. “ Be quiet, you terror ! ” Mrs. Lieroff rebuked her offspring.

“ Once she came in as usual, this little devil was playing with his tin soldiers and you'd think took no notice of nothing. All of a sudden he turns round to her and says, ‘ Mrs. Chalesh, it is time you go home. Have you nothing to do at all at your home ? You can find something if you look, plenty of work if you was not lazy ! ’ What do you say to such an old head ? You could have knocked me down with a hammer, I was so astounded.” The children were giggling. Mrs. Laichter stroked his head fondly. “ He should live long ! ” she said again.

“ Well,” said Miss Brunin, “ children will be children. They are like parrots, one must be careful what to say in their presence.”

Mrs. Lieroff did not like Miss Brunin's remark. “ You mean to say,” she asked, “ that the child repeats what he heard me say ? ” “ Excuse me,” Miss Brunin answered, “ I am not speaking personally ; I speak in general.”

“ I wouldn't mind,” said Mrs. Lieroff, “ if I had said so, but by my blessed life, I don't know from whom he heard it. Not of me, I assure you. He has it from his own head.” “ Mummy, dear, I never didn't have it in my own head. I heard it when you spoke to Cousin Nellie, when she come to show you her new hat what Uncle Solly said she spent too much money on it.” “ Shut up your jaw ! ” Mrs. Lieroff, who turned scarlet, said. “ I won't take you any more with me. You'll stick at home, you little liar.” The

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child did not take a bit of notice. He seemed to be used to it and ate his cake unconcernedly. "Yes, these kids," said Mrs. Creepinger, "they are a handful to manage. I tell you, it is true what you say, they do tell things which nobody knows how they know about it. When I had my last tenant next door—you know that the house belongs to me—once we was all sitting in the garden and she came out with her husband and we had some friends with us. She told me that she was at a bridge party last night and that they are going to-night again. She was a very smart woman. My Gertie—here is the beauty"—Mrs. Creepinger pointed to her older girl—"said to her, 'Yes, Mamma was not surprised that you owe all the tradespeople money, because you lose it in cards.' I was thunderstruck," said Mrs. Creepinger. "What can you do? You must not say a word in the presence of these little monkeys. Believe me," she said again, "they do give you some trouble. One day, this little terror here"—she pointed to her little boy. "Some traveller gave my husband a present, an expensive box of face powder, about 8s. 6d.—not that I use much powder. I use it once in the blue moon and then a sixpenny box is good enough for me."

Little Cecil asked Gertie in a whisper, "Does blue moon mean every day?" The girl pinched him to keep quiet. "I don't hold with spending money on these things." The children were winking at one another, and little Cecil whispered to his sister loud enough to be heard by everybody, "Didn't mummy pay 5s. 6d. for the last box, Gertie?" Mrs. Creepinger continued without taking any notice. "One morning he came quietly into my bedroom, took the box of expensive powder and emptied it all over his face and nightie, and started jumping about, and the two other kids after him. I woke up with a start and thought it was a little monster, the way he looked. You can imagine that I didn't spare him. I nearly murdered him. I was so upset. I never hardly used the powder, yet I couldn't help laughing

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at the same time. You ought to have seen his face, the tears running down his cheeks, leaving dark streaks on the powder. It was a sight to frighten the life out of you."

"You forgot the rouge, mummy," said Master Cecil, nudging Gertie in the ribs with his elbow. "Nobody never ask you, and hold your tongue when I speak! My husband is right. He ought to go to a boarding school to learn manners, but my mother, bless her, objected," sighed Mrs. Creepinger.

"Yes, grandma said it costs too much money and I would get too snobbish," Master Cecil gently reminded his mother. "But you will go after Passover, please God—I'll watch that you go." "Well," remarked Mrs. Lieroff, "my boy has not the opportunity to get hold of my things so easily. I like order first of all and I know how nosey Mr. Parker is (meaning her little Davela), so I locks it up in my drawer." "It ain't for that, mummy dear, because, because you said to Mrs. Chalesh, the shicksa helps herself with your powder, a messah mishunah on her, that's why!" They all burst out laughing and Davela looked quite a hero.

After tea the children went into the garden, where the nursemaid joined them, and they had games together, while the ladies went into the drawing-room. "Give us a tune, Miss Brunin," asked Mrs. Lieroff. "I have heard that you play and sing nicely." Miss Brunin readily responded and sang "Ave Marie" and the "Lost Chord." When she had finished singing the ladies applauded and praised her voice. Some were of the opinion that she ought to have her voice trained. "What was the last song that you was singing," asked Mrs. Lieroff. "'The Lost Chord,' by Sullivan," answered Miss Brunin. "It is nice," said Mihma Esther, "but it is too much of a church song. Why not sing 'Kol Nidra'?" (a tune chanted on the eve of the White Fast). It is a different thing, it goes through you, it reminds you that you are a Jew." "You are right, Mihma Esther," several ladies agreed.

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"When I was single," said Mrs. Lieroff, "my favourite tune was the 'Maiden's Prayer.'" "Oh, you play the piano?" asked Mrs. Millstein. "I used to play grand," said Mrs. Lieroff, "but since I am married, what with the shicksas and the kid, I haven't much time left for the piano." "I believe in teaching the kids some sort of music," said Mrs. Goldstone, "it is nice when you come in company." "So do I," said Mrs. Creepinger. "I lets my Gertie learn piano and Beatie violin. Of course, I won't bother them too much; so long as they know how to play the latest music hall tune, it is quite enough."

"You are right," said Mrs. Shwatz, "for why should we bother the kids? I think it is too much; I don't want to make a professor out of them. To me comes a pianer teacher, she learned her music in a place called Royal Academy, and spent all her years to learn, and now, what use has she of it? She has to give lessons for 3s. 6d. a time. Besides, her music is too high-class that nobody can't understand it. I asked her to give us a ragging tune, so she says she ain't used to that kind of music. Well, what's the good of all her learning, I ask you?"

"You are right," said Mrs. Laichter. "My Beckila's teacher was the same. He never couldn't play a simpleton tune, not him, always such songs what nobody couldn't help him singing—he says they was operers."

"You say of spending money on children's education," said our hostess. "My kids, they cost me any amount of money, and, bless them, I can't see no fireworks in them. Now," she continued, "my milkman has two boys and they both won scholarships. He hasn't hardly spent one pound on them. One had to give up studying, as the father was too poor to help him." "Yes," said Mrs. Goldstone, "I know of a poor shoemaker in the East End who has three kids, and they all won scholarships. One, the youngest, a kid of about eleven, won £40 and three years' learning for

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nothing." "Oh, yes," said Mrs. Lieroff, "such things are only possible in Board Schools, but my husband wouldn't let my Davela go to an ordinary Board School. How comes? A metzia! he doesn't need scholarships and a few pounds neither. Why, he had the chickenpox, and I took him to Brighton for three weeks. It cost me fifty pounds, by my blessed life. And as for study, what will he become, a lawyer?—not necessary. My husband, bless him, writes only in Yiddish, and all his life should he carry on such business! For money you get everything. We have book-keepers, typewriters—you ought to see. I have two chicksas (Gentile girls) in the office. One, her father was an officer killed in the War, and she has had an eddication, you bet, and now she works for us for two pounds a week. As long as Davela knows enough to help my husband in the business, that is all he wants. His endowment is £2,000, bless him, he needn't be particular about thirty pounds a scholarship, thank God." She finished her speech.

"Yes," said Mihma Esther, "all those educations are all good enough, but the chief thing is they should learn Yiddishkeit (Judaism). All the other learnings are good for this world, but we must do something for the soul which is for the other world and for God."

"My husband watches that, he is from (religious)," said Mrs. Goldstone. "Me and Mrs. Millstein, we have a grand Hebrew teacher. He teaches the children of the President from our Synagogue."

"And my husband, you know him?" said Mrs. Lieroff, "he will have the best for his Davela. He must have a Hebrew teacher who lives up Maida Vale. His lesson is fifteen and six, but it is too far for him to come, so my husband pays him three pounds for three lessons—just like him," she laughed. She was looking for the impression she had made on the listeners. But they were silent.

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"I let my Rachel learn painting," Mrs. Goldstone said. "You ought to see how she takes to it; her teacher gives me great hopes about her future."

"Why, you are going to make a painter of her?" asked Mrs. Lieroff ironically. "Why not?" said Mrs. Goldstone, rather offended. "If the kid shows talent, my husband doesn't mind. Besides, to become a painter costs some money," she said emphasizing the last word.

"I can't see where the profit comes in!" remarked Mrs. Lieroff. "I wouldn't let my child learn painting. A metziah! If you have money, you can buy the grandest pictures. You ought to see, my husband bought a bargain—two old paintings for £150. Of course, I didn't like them, but the dealer said they were antique. It must have taken the painter months to paint them. My husband, bless him, his profit of one week is sometimes more than that."

She laughed. Mrs. Goldstone was now really offended. "Why," she said, "you speak as if you are the only one that has money. I needn't teach my children a profession to earn money, thank God. My Rachel will get £3,000 dowry, as all my other children, please God. I want to teach her something nice, what the average Jewish girls whose parents can afford don't learn. It is true, because we are rich, that's why we can afford our daughter should paint for pleasure." Mrs. Lieroff was beaten and said nothing.

"The chief thing in a picture is if it has a gold frame," was the opinion of Mrs. Shwatz. "Me and mine husband we was going to a grand wedding, so we was having expensable clothes made, and mine husband bought me a pendant. It was something, I tell you! So we had us painted in oil. He painted it so good that you can recognize that the jewellery is real, and my husband put it in gilded frames. Well, I insure you, you have never seen in all your life a grander effect; it makes my dressing-room look like a palace."

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"I believe in giving children a good education," remarked Mrs. Goldstone. "I am most particular in teaching them to tell the truth. My father used to say, 'show me the liar and I will show you the thief.'"

They were silent for a while, then Mrs. Lieroff said, "You know that my husband made me a present of our house?" "Why, what do you mean, is not the house yours?" asked Mrs. Creeping. "Of course, but now it is written over on my name, furniture and all. "I know why," said Rachel Goldstone, "because mummy said you owe a lot of money and you don't want to pay." "And daddy said," interrupted her younger sister, "you want to be a bankrupt." "A nice way of teaching your children the truth!" hurled out Mrs. Lieroff, throwing a killing look at Mrs. Goldstone. Suddenly there were heard shrieks, screams, and blows from the garden. All the children came running in, gesticulating, and all trying to tell what happened.

The ladies jumped up, ran out in the garden, and found the nursemaid separating the three boys. The mothers ran to the rescue, and there was Dave with his lovely lace collar torn, his velvet suit dusty, his face scratched. Solly Goldstone was in much the same state, and Cecil not much better. Mrs. Lieroff began to scream at the top of her voice, "I told you not to play with that ruffian," pointing to Solly Goldstone. "What!" screamed Mrs. Goldstone, "my child a ruffian! A merit on you, you upstarts!" Mrs. Lieroff was beside herself. "Anyhow," she hurled at Mrs. Goldstone, "my husband made his money in a straight way, which not many can boast of," looking at Mrs. Goldstone with a suggestive expression. Mrs. Goldstone turned blue. "Well," she said in a biting tone, "one must believe all what you say, Lier—offs!" and she took hold roughly of her boy and dragged him inside.

The scene that followed was indescribable. Davela (should live!) threw himself on the floor and began to scream

and kick with all his might, whilst his mother cried with rage and Mrs. Laichter tried to sooth her genteel grandson.

Mrs. Creepinger was very vexed. She took hold of the birthday hero, boxed his ears vigorously, and sent him upstairs to bed.

CHAPTER SIX.

The Engagement of the Nurse, and the Confinement.

MRS. MILLSTEIN'S bedroom was hung round with cards bearing texts—the "Shir Hamalos," a psalm, together with the additional words in Hebrew, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live"—this being a charm to keep the Evil One away. The form of the cards suited strangely the pink satin wallpaper and the richly furnished room.

Close to the bed was the cradle of the newly arrived baby. In it had previously been rocked a black cat, for luck, and as the cat had jumped out, the mother had exclaimed, "So should my child be able to jump out, please God!"

Into the cradle had also been placed sweets and raisins for the other children to scramble for. The baby was holding a length of red ribbon in its hand, as a charm against the Evil Eye, while pinned to its elaborately trimmed silk gown was a silver coin engraved with a Hebrew letter, an amulet blessed by a Rabbi. To complete these defences against the Devil, a new Mezuzah, a strip of parchment with a few Biblical sentences in Hebrew written on it and contained in a tin case about three inches in length and half an inch wide, had replaced the old one, so as to ensure its efficacy by having no single letter effaced. This, credited with the same power as the "Shir Hamalos," was fixed on the doorposts, as it is to be found in all Jewish homes.

Amidst all this, Mrs. Millstein, the young mother, was resting on a settee. She was a good-looking brunette, robed in a pink silk wrapper, trimmed with lace and dark red ribbon. Several other ladies were with her, while a nurse was busy offering refreshments.

"Have some cake, Mrs. Goldstone," urged Mrs. Millstein, from her resting place. "There ain't any hurry," said that lady, a woman of about forty years or so, with a martyr's expression on her face; she was known to be suffering with "nerves." "I am not going home yet; there is plenty of time." The nurse, after having offered each visitor wine and cake, left the company to prepare tea for them. "Why do you wait, Mrs. Laichter? Won't you wet the baby with some wine?" the hostess turned to another visitor. "Go on, have it, it is the best kosher wine that my husband could get. And you, Mrs. Lieroff? Drink the baby's health." The two ladies spoken to were mother and daughter. "A Metziah (bargain)!" retorted Mrs. Laichter, a short, fat woman wearing a blonde shaitel (wig). "What do you think, I never tasted wine before? We got plenty at home." "All my life should I be so short of everything as I am short of wine," added the daughter. "Why, bless me, you ought to see the empty bottles in my cellar, I could open a shop with them." "Still, wish the baby luck," insisted the hostess.

Mrs. Laichter took hold of her glass and said to the hostess, "Mazol Tov (good luck). You should have nachas (joy) with her. She should grow up to be a good Jewish woman. You should lead her under the chupah (canopy)." She moved her lips, saying a prayer, dipped her cake into the glass, ate it, and drank the wine. "Really nice cake," remarked Mrs. Lieroff. "Of course, I can see it is home-made. I never buys the shop cake, such a good year on them how good their cake is!" "Nothing to wonder at," remarked the hostess, "so it ought to be good; it was baked with pure butter, 5s. 6d. a pound. Mrs.

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Creepinger baked it for me." Mrs. Creepinger looked a bit uncomfortable, for she knew that she had bought the cake at Lyons', and she was not quite sure about the butter.

"I am sure you look so fine, unbeshroie (the evil eye be not on you)," said Mrs. Laichter to Mrs. Millstein. "Yes, I am feeling much better, thank God," said the hostess; "and, by the way, how is it that I didn't saw you all the time? I am surprised at you." "We was here soon after we received a card, but your nurse wouldn't let us see you," said Mrs. Lieroff, quite offended. "Yes, it is rather unpleasant about the visitors," admitted the hostess, "but you know, when we take in a trained nurse we must put up with their ways, whether we like it or not. I am in her hands, what can I do? Still, you could have come before." "A metziah!" retorted Mrs. Lieroff, "it ain't too late now for a good thing." "Yes, them trained nurses," said Mrs. Laichter. "Its different with a confindet woman what it used to be in mine time." "Yes," said Mrs. Goldstone, "I had some experience with trained nurses believe me, it is hard labour to get on with them. You take a lady in the house instead of a nurse!"

"With my first and second child I had Jewish-women nurses, they may all have a fit on them! Then we moved up here and my husband said it ain't nice to have an ordinary woman as a nurse, besides the doctors here have put in their heads to refuse to come when there is no trained nurse. Now, my mother (should live long!) is from (religious) and she would not give her consent to that; at last, after my husband and I were talking to her and pointing out the reason, she consented, but she said it should be at least a Yiddisha. Where should we get a Yiddisha trained nurse? My mother belongs to the Jewish Nurses' and Lying-in Home, in Vallance Road, Underwood Street; she pays a couple of pennies a week to the fund. I went there and asked the matron whether she could let me have a trained nurse from

there, as my mother is paying for years and never needed a nurse until now. The matron turned round to me and said, 'Madam, we do not give trained nurses here for private nursing. Besides, you wish to avail yourself of the charity fund of which your mother is a contributor. It is meant for the benefit of the poor only.' Good afternoon, Madam !' and she walked out of the room. I was furious. I came home and tells my mother of the cheek of that woman, and my mother decided to discontinue her contribution.

"Then my troubles began. I had taken in a Goieshka nurse (a Gentile) and she couldn't make out my mother and my mother didn't understand her. She made all my plates and crockery trifah (polluted). My mother tried to explain to her ; but after all she is a shicksa (non-Jewish), she could not see the importance of it all. Once she wanted to put a bit of cheese on a meat plate. My mother was horrified. She could not explain, but she took it out of the nurse's hands.

"The nurse seemed first amused, then offended. 'Why !' she said, 'the plate is clean, I washed it with soap and water !' You know," said Mrs. Goldstone, further, "since we must not use soap for washing up, how my poor mother felt. She collapsed. The consequence was that my mother, in order to prevent the whole kitchen shouldn't get trifah, didn't let the nurse touch the food or crockery any more, and she did all the hard work herself and the nurse had an easy time of it ; a Goi (Gentile) has the mazol (luck) ! Once, on a Friday evening, my son's Rabbi came for supper. They were just going to make Kiddish (blessing the wine, as is the custom all over the world on Friday night), when the nurse came in and touched the bottle by putting it further up the table, and it at once became nessecch (unlawful to say blessings over the wine when touched by a Gentile).

"You could understand my consternation, as the wine cannot be used any more for consumption by us Jews ; and

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yet I couldn't let her feel it, she would get offended." "Quite true," approved Mrs. Laichter. "Then," continued Mrs. Goldstone, "she keeps rules and regulations as if she is paid for it."

"You tell me about them rules and regulations! My poor mother had enough with them," said Mrs. Lieroff. "Yes, when my daughter was preglant (pregnant) with her Davela (should live!)" began Mrs. Laichter, "she put it in her head she must have a trained nurse. I had seven kids, and, thank God, I got over it without them. Well, of course, mother, bless her, couldn't understand it," exclaimed Mrs. Lieroff smiling. "You know the blessed lot in this neighbourhood, they all have trained nurses, how comes it that I be different from them? You know Polly Aarons had a nurse two weeks before and four weeks after her confinement, and Cissie Cohen and Phœbe Myers (you know the clique how they like to brag), they all had nurses in uniform."

"Of course," said Mrs. Laichter, "I don't understand all them new things, but my sister told me that her neighbour, Mrs. Levi's daughter, had also a nurse in uniform, and she come down one day to see her mother. You ought to see how she walked, the nurse behind her with the baby. She looked like a real lady. All Cammarshal Road was astounded; we told everybody that Beckela's husband was a master tailor. It ain't nice," said Mrs. Laichter further. "Who is Mrs. Levi's son-in-law? Only a manager in a cap factory! 'All right,' says I, 'let be a trained nurse, but them nurses are expensive, and you can't get a Jewish trained nurse. I told my daughter to take one of them Jewish-women nurses and put her on a cap and apron; people will think she is trained and it will be cheaper.'"

"Of course, mother, bless her," said Mrs. Lieroff, "did not know that those women don't take any more 12s. or 15s. a week, but £3 or even £3 10s. with everything so dear. I thought I might as well have a real trained nurse."

"Well," said Mrs. Laichter, further, "I thought when it is a fashion to have a trained nurse to have one for two weeks." "Oh, mother!" exclaimed Mrs. Lieroff, "such things can be done in Old Montague Street in the East End. Why you ought to hear the goings on when Sadie Hyams kept her nurse only three weeks! She was talked about by all her friends who came to visit her, and they said that she could not afford to keep her longer in spite of her showing off."

"It is true," said Mrs. Laichter. "My sister pointed out to me that Becky was right. We told everybody that she was rich, so how comes she to have a nurse for two weeks? My daughter wrote for the nurse. After she spoke about her price, she gave her a list what to buy. The list was:

Two dozen diapers.

Three night and three day gowns.

One bottle of Lysol.

One mackintosh.

One box of nursery powder.

One pound cotton wool, one piece of curd soap, etc."

While the nurse was ordering the list, Mrs. Laichter interrupted. "Two dozen dappers! What's that?" "Napkins, mother," explained Mrs. Lieroff. "Natkes!" she asked in astonishment. "God is with you," she said to the nurse. "Do you think my daughter is going to open a shop? What will she do with all them things? Lisil! What's that for? Is it a medicine for the stomach?" "No, madam," answered the nurse, "a disinfectant." "Noo," said Mrs. Laichter, "let it be a disefecter. One pound wadding—for why a whole pound? Why not wait and see if want you it at all?"

"Of course," remarked Mrs. Laichter, "the nurse was a bit cross, but I thought all tzoers (troubles) should be on your head! If you want my daughter to spend all that money, I wants to know if she can't do without all them things."

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"She said many more things to buy what I never heard in my blessed life. My daughter, of course, didn't expect to spend all that money, but she was a young child and a bit uncomfortable about it. She says, 'Mother, if the nurse say I must have, I must ; I dare say that I am not the only one who gets them expensive jobs.' In the meantime, my son-in-law comes in, and when he hears it (you know them young peoples ; they have a bit of money, they must spend it), he says, 'That's all right, mother. What's the matter? When the nurse thinks we must get it, we must. I can afford, thank God ; a metziah (bargain), it costs so much, let it cost a little more.'

"I says to them, 'My children, do as you like it, I wash mine hands of it all. You wanter throw away money, do it.' And I says not another word."

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Creepinger, "they are expensive, those trained nurses. I had them. I know what it means. My mother also objected at first, but I had to have one because, firstly, it is the fashion, and then they are not more expensive in the long run than the Jewish-women nurses. At least they are ladies and they are clean. Of course, I couldn't see no fireworks in my last nurse, considering the money she took. My mother, bless her, expected altogether more of her. She knows what the Jewish-women nurses are doing ; at least they earn their money. They see to the patient, clean and wash and send the children to school ; do the shopping, see to the husband's food ; why, they don't rest a minute. What do you think ? I had a Goieshka (Gentile) nurse last time. You don't know how to speak to them. My mother said to her, 'Nurse, will you get the master's supper ready ?' She turned round to mother, if you please, and said quite indignantly, 'Madam, you make a mistake ; you think that you speak to your servant. Your son-in-law is Mr. Creepinger to me, but not my master.'

"What do you think of that? Well, I thought to myself, if that ain't a bit allright. I wanted to let her feel it, and said to my mother, 'Don't trouble nurse about it, do it yourself.' Do you think she cared? Not a bit, and poor mother had to prepare the supper herself."

"Oh, that ain't nothing," interrupted Mrs. Laichter. "Then comes the rules and regulations about feeding the poor baby. It was a pantomime. Baby had to wait two hours from one feed to another one, and when baby cries, I says to my daughter, 'Give him to suck!' You ought to see how she jumped up. 'Who is here responsible, me or you?' she asks. My poor daughter had to keep her tongue, She, nebech (alas), paid all that money and you mustn't interfere with all your expenses."

"But," interrupted Mrs. Creepinger, "when nurse went out, my mother used to do as she liked and the baby sucked all the time. When nurse comes back, and it happened that the baby was always crying, she insisted that the baby had indigestion. How ridiculous!" "Yes," said Mrs. Goldstone, "another misfortune, the going-out business. It used to upset my poor mother every time. She was used like, with the Jewish-women nurses, who hardly went out all the time they were with her, except on Saturdays, when they knew that most of the visitors don't carry any money and she won't lose her tips. But then they had forgot to come back again."

"It is true they are not exactly like the trained nurses, but you can at least command them about, which you can't do with the others. Once, when the nurse went out, my mother was so upset about it, that she made up her mind to pique the nurse. On her return she said, 'Nurse, it is a pity you went out, as you lost two and six in tips.' She seemed to be annoyed, and said, 'I can always afford to lose two and six, but not my liberty!'

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"I nodded to my mother to keep quiet, but there, it was too late. Besides, my mother objected the way they fed the patient. I had to eat and drink by the clock, while my mother used to every now and again to have something to eat. It used to be ruckshions. But when she went out my mother used to have her own back. She gave me to eat and drink as much as she liked, and once I had an accident. I was just having a cup of milk, when we heard the nurse coming. My mother quickly put it in the cupboard and upset it on some meat plates which were in there." "Oh, what an ungluck (misfortune)," interjected Mrs. Laichter. "I knows something about going out. I ask her, 'Nurse, you go out again?' She says, 'Yes, Mrs. Laichter, this be our rules and regulations.' I thought to myself, a black year on you with your rules and regulations !

"I says to mine daughter, 'I must tell the doctor about it.' The doctor was a Yiddisher man, so I thought he would understand a geschaft (business). I says to him, 'What do you say to the nurse, doctor? She goes out every day two hours.' He says 'What about it?' I says we wouldn't let her go. He says, 'Then why do you let her?' 'But,' says I, 'she says them is her rules and regulations.' 'Well,' he says, 'if it is her rules, I dare say you must let her go.' 'But do you think, doctor,' I says again, 'a nurse ought to go out at all?' What do you think he says to me? 'If you can prevent it, do it!' 'But she doesn't want to listen,' says I. 'She must have fresh air.' 'Then,' says he, 'let her have fresh air.'

"I thought to mineself, 'A missa meshina (violent death) on you and the nurse together.' They are both a bad lot." "I think a Jewish woman should have a Jewish nurse," remarked another visitor who had been silent during the whole conversation.

It was Mrs. Shwatz, a thin little woman, smartly dressed and all bejewelled. "That's what I says. Them other nurses may be ladies and cleaner, but a Yiddisher soul is Yiddish. At least you know your house is not made trifah (polluted), and when you engage with her, if you don't pay her so much, she makes it up in tips, which you can't say to the other."

"You are quite right," interrupted Mrs. Creepinger, "I had an incident with my nurse. My husband wanted the nurse to stay another week, but considering that I was downstairs and she had not so much running up and down to do, she doesn't deserve so much money, we decided that mine husband should speak to her. He said to her, 'Nurse, we would like to have you for another week, but would you take less money considering the tips you have made from the visitors?' Instead of answering, she first looked at me and at mine husband and said, 'Mr. Creepinger, I have one price; I am either on duty or off duty; if your visitors were generous I cannot see any reason why you expect to benefit by it.' That's what I call impudence, eh?"

"Well, I had experience with Jewish-women nurses," remarked Mrs. Millstein, who had been listening all the time to the conversation of her guests. "It is all well and good if you get a properly trained nurse (Jewish), but suppose not? Of course, if you wish to have your place kosher you must have a Yiddisher person to see to the cooking and kitchen."

"But look how expensible it is," remarked Mrs. Shwatz. "Well," said Mrs. Millstein, "if you wish to have proper nursing, you must put up with the rest. If it cost so much, let it cost more. A metziah! It is only for a few weeks. As for the crockery, you must close an eye over it. I would'nt have one of those Jewish-women nurses, not I. As a cook, yes; but a nurse, how comes? I couldn't get used to their ways; they have no system. Besides, they are altogether

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unfitted for the job ; they are inquisitive, have no tact, and poke their noses where they ought not to."

Here Mrs. Goldstone interrupted. " I had two of them. I know something about them. It is true they have no rules and regulations, but they have chutzpah (cheek), and plenty of it ; this is their rules and regulations. What do you think of it ? You know my cousin, Slunky, the jeweller ? They formally lived in Union Street, Whitechapel. They bought a house in Holland Park." " I live there," said Mrs. Shwatz. " Does he live there a long time ? " " No," said Mrs. Goldstone, " only since a year. She had a boy after four girls ; you can imagine the simcha (rejoicing). They had a grand Bris (circumcision party), with cook and waiters. He is, thank God, well-to-do. So they had a Jewish-woman nurse there. When she finished bathing the baby, he gave her 3s. bath money. She looked at the money and said, ' What ! you give me only 3s., and with a boy after four girls ; you ought to be ashamed of yourself ! You think because you live in Holland Park you are somebody ! You ought to go to the East End and take lessons from the people there ; the least they give me is 5s., but 7s. 6d. or 10s. is the usual, and you such a rich man ! ' " " I wouldn't stand it," said Mrs. Millstein. " Oh, she didn't care," said Mrs. Goldstone, " she knows that they must have her with nurses so scarce."

" A metziah (bargain)," said Mrs. Shwatz. " What she said ! I would insult her and send her about her business, but she said she is a Yiddisha and wouldn't make the kitchen trifah (unclean)."

Mrs. Goldstone paid no attention to this interruption and continued, " Then he is a member of the United Synagogue up there, and the Chosan (the chanter of the public prayers in Synagogue) was the Mohel (the performer of the circumcision). He calls himself ' operator for circumcision,' not an ordinary Mohel, has certificates from three doctors ; a

proper man, I tell you. The nurse knew that he collected his fee in a plate on the table—and he made a nice few pounds, you bet, with all the rich visitors, and my cousin was also not behind putting his share in the plate, I assure you. When he wanted to go home, the nurse asked him, ‘Mr., what about my tip?’ In the presence of everybody you can imagine his confusion, nebech (alas). He said, ‘Well, for the first time that I am a Mohel, for over twenty years, a nurse asks me for a tip.’ She didn’t care a bit, and said, ‘If you don’t give it yourself, I must ask for it.’ He took out 2s. and gave it to her. She took it, looked at it and said, ‘What, 2s. ! For this I needn’t come to the grand neighbourhood. You ought to go to the East End and take lessons from the Mohels there. Why, the least they give me is 3s., but they think nothing of 5s. or 7s. 6d. This,’ she said, ‘I call unselfishness.’ The man was speechless ; I did pity him.” “I can’t blame them there,” said Mrs. Millstein, “didn’t we hear that the tips are counted as part of the fee? Poor women ; it is their living, why not pay them a decent wage?”

“But,” insisted Mrs. Shwatz, “a Yiddisha woman ——” She did not finish her words, as just then the door opened and the nurse appeared with a tray with cups and saucers for tea, neatly dressed all in white, with a very pleasant expression on her face. She began serving them with tea the while. They all followed her with their eyes. Mrs. Goldstone bent towards Mrs. Millstein and said in a whisper, “Aren’t you jealous?” nodding towards the nurse. “Oh, I trust my husband,” said Mrs. Millstein with the mien of a heroine, “I am not afraid.” “And I don’t,” said Mrs. Goldstone. “A man is a man, and all men are alike!” The nurse offered her a cup of tea.

CHAPTER SEVEN.

A Brith Milah (Circumcision).

A SON is born to Mr. and Mrs. Froomberg, and to-day is the Brith. Since they are celebrating the house-warming, having moved into a new house on the same occasion, it is expected to be a grand affair. Mr. Froomberg is a boot and shoe manufacturer on a big scale, very rich, rather orthodox, like his father, and lives in Willesden Green.

The first guests to arrive were Mihma Esther and her husband, and they were received most cordially by Mr. Froomberg. "Mazol Tov! Mazol Tov (good luck)!" she said to Mr. Froomberg. "You should have nachas (joy) with him, you should bring him up in Torah (learning), Chochmah (wisdom), Mitzwahs and Maasim Tovim (good deeds), Amen," in which her husband joined heartily. Mr. Froomberg thanked them for their good wishes and said, "Please God." The Brith which is taking place to-day is of great importance. It is not an ordinary affair, because Mr. and Mrs. Froomberg have three daughters and they had two sons who died. One died soon after the circumcision and the other when but six days old, just before the circumcision, so it will be easily understood of what consequence this little one was to his parents.

Mrs. Froomberg suggested that the circumcision might be postponed until the baby grew stronger, being haunted by the fear of losing this one, too, but Mr. Froomberg has been assured that the baby is in a fit state for circumcision, and therefore it is taking place to-day.

Many more guests arrived, all wishing "Mazol Tov." While the men remained downstairs discussing business

and the topic of the day, the ladies went upstairs to inspect the bedroom, look at the baby, and wish "Mazol Tov" to the mother.

"May I have a look at the Yachson (person of importance)?" asked Mihma Esther. "Don't be afraid, I won't give him the evil eye." The nurse showed her the baby. She looked at it—"How ugly!" she exclaimed, pretending that it was true, and she spat out three times, a sign that she averted the evil eye. "Really a handsome little chap, unbesbroie," the ladies agreed. "You ought to see mine husband when he heard of the boy," said Mrs. Froomberg, senior. "He lighted up all them electric lights, and when the girls got born, he turned out the lights each time." "Of course," said Mihma Esther, "a boy he lights up all the corners of the room!" In due time all the visitors arrived, and it was thought advisable to proceed with the ceremony. The Mohel came up to examine the baby, and gave some instructions to the nurse, telling her to prepare the baby for the circumcision, that was, to dress it in its festive robe and ribbons, which was left for Mihma Esther to do, since it is regarded as a Mitzwah. After having dressed the child, she rocked it in her arms and wished the mother that she should live to see his Barmitzwah (confirmation), lead him to the Chupah (marriage canopy), and that he should grow up to be a good Jew.

She handed the baby to the other ladies, who each in turn acted likewise, and finally it was handed over to Miss Freedman, a young sister of Mrs. Froomberg, a school teacher, who was acting as godmother. She carried the baby downstairs where the circumcision was to take place, and was followed by several ladies of the elder generation, who remained standing at the door snatching "a bit of Mitzwah," as they said. Miss Freedman handed the infant to her brother, who was godfather. The room had a festive aspect, lit up with electric lights and numerous candles in

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silver candlesticks. The Mohel, whose head was covered with a black silk skull cap, was dressed in the garb of an English clergyman. He began to prepare all the paraphernalia, to sterilize the instruments for the circumcision, and was followed in this with interest by the guests present.

He took hold of each instrument in a conspicuous way, so that it could be seen by everyone present, and placed it into the sterilizer, praising his efficiency and cleanliness all the time and telling the company how particular he was and of his previous successes. All the gentlemen, of course, had their hats on, most of them silk top hats. The father of the child was wrapped in his tallis (prayer shawl). He looked very pale. The baby was slumbering peacefully all the time, not dreaming of the crucifying pain which awaited it.

Mr. Freedman handed the victim over to old Mr. Froomberg, the grandfather. He placed the baby on a pillow which lay across his knees. Near by was an empty chair for the Prophet Elijah. As Mr. Froomberg took hold of the baby it opened its eyes and looked wonderingly at the old man. The grandfather kissed it tenderly. Then the Mohel asked him to separate the baby's legs for the operation. The old man did so very carefully, but they were not separated wide enough, so the Mohel did it himself to his own satisfaction and to suit his purpose. The poor little baby began to scream with pain. The father was trembling in his tallis, the grandfather was agitated, both were occupied with fear, but they were braving it as befits good Jews. When the baby began to scream the father stepped forward, but the Mohel stopped him, declaring that he had not even touched the baby. "He will be all right," he said, and the baby cried because it was bad-tempered. In a joke he added, "The baby thinks too much of himself." He placed a kind of metal clip on the parts to be operated, to press back the foreskin, and this must have given the baby terrible pain,

for it screamed still more than before. The atmosphere was very tense ; everybody was watching, and suddenly the baby gave a piercing scream and turned blue in the face—the circumcision had taken place. . . . The Mohel said the necessary prayer whilst attending to the wound, wetting the baby's lips with wine, the father and the other men joined in the prayer and answered " Amen." " Mazol Tov ! Mazol Tov ! " said the Mohel. " Mazol Tov ! " echoed all the voices of the men, whilst the baby was still screaming piteously.

The ladies at the door joined in the joyous tumult that followed, not one of them giving a thought to the poor little being, except perhaps his godmother, who looked pale, fearing in her heart for her sister and her sad experience of the past. " Mazol Tov ! " repeated the ladies at the top of their voices, " he is now a Jew." It seemed so paradoxical, this outburst of joyous exultation, whilst the poor little sufferer was still crying broken-heartedly for pain.

One would think that they were void of any sympathetic feelings, but no, these very women would not care to witness the vaccination of that baby, it would upset them so ; yet here nobody thought of the infant's agony. It was regarded as a great Mitzwah ; it was their religion which had hardened their hearts and robbed them of any softer feelings—besides that, they did not feel the pain. When the mother heard the screams of the baby in her room while it was being circumcised, she, too, began to cry. She was thinking of the cruel pain that her dear little, long-expected baby boy had to pass through. She was dreading the consequences, but, as a good Jewess, she was ashamed of her tears.

The ladies were making fun of her and laughing. " Why do you cry ? " they asked her. " A Metziah." " He'll get over it." " He is not the first one." It isn't easy to become a Jew," they comforted her. " That's the only pain he'll have in his life, whilst we women never leave off suffering. Besides,

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a Jew is born to suffer." They returned with the baby, which was in great pain and looked blue, its handsome little face drawn and pinched. The nurse placed him quickly to the mother's breast. The mother was pale and trembling; she was afraid to hug the baby lest she should hurt it. There was great excitement amongst the returning ladies, praising the quickness of the Mohel, and one said that she hardly heard the baby cry, at which Mrs. Froomberg remarked that she thought he cried enough. "Mazol Tov," said Mrs. Froomberg, senior, with a beaming face, to her daughter-in-law. "He is a Jew now," added Mihma Esther, "thank God!" There followed the usual festivity and dinner, eating and drinking, and animated conversations, and the company seemed to be happy and contented. After the meal was over, the Mohel, who was also a Cantor, said grace, and, after having examined the baby, took his leave. Whilst the ladies were busy at one end of the table, we may turn our attention to the other end, which was occupied solely by gentlemen, who seemed to be having an interesting conversation. There were many of them whom we would call intelligent; some of them called themselves actually broad-minded and advanced; while one amongst them, a certain Mr. Newman, was actually a learned man, a Hebrew scholar, but, strange to say, irreligious, a kind of freethinker or heretic, who was called "the Epicoras." The conversation turned on the Mohel. "Well," said one of the gentlemen, "I should like to know what is really a Mohel and who is entitled to be a Mohel?" The opinions differed according to their individual views. One maintained that the modern Mohelim had debased their sacred office into a money-making concern, and that it had become a kind of competition amongst themselves.

"Some," he said, "call themselves operators, others specialists, some again, experts; others are the possessors of certificates signed by various medical practitioners, which

they call diplomas. With regard to their efficiency, some call themselves surgeon-Mohels, and as most of them are either fowl and cattle killers or Cantors, a kind of semi-clergyman, they also prefix the title 'Reverend' on their cards." "If this is the case," remarked another gentleman, "why not employ a medical man straight away, so long as he is a Jew?" "Quite true," another gentleman answered, "we will then be on the safe side." "True!" said another one, "there would be less risk to endanger the life of the child, but then the child would not be Yiddished according to the Din (law), although he will be circumcised." "Quite correct," said another one, "but such circumcision will in no way differ from that of the Mohammedans. The child, as far as circumcision is concerned, will be either a Turk, Arab, Moor, or Persian child, but certainly not Jewish."

"May I ask in which way the two circumcisions differ?" asked again the former gentleman. "Well!" answered the other one, "they differ in the Preah (tear) and Metzitzah (suck); then the Bracha (blessing)." "But there is not a word mentioned in the Mosaic Law about the Preah and Metzitzah," said again that gentleman. "At least, I have not found it." "But greater heads than yours have found it," retorted the other one. "What, then, do signify the words 'Hemel Yemel?'" "Well," said the other one, "both mean circumcision." "Why should the same word be repeated twice? The reason is," he continued, "that our learned Rabbies have explained that the first means Preah and the second Metzitzah." "But how did they explain it?" asked again the former one. "How did they prove it? I am sure," he said, "that Mr. Newman will be able to explain such difficult questions." They all looked at Mr. Newman, who answered, "Well, gentlemen, I am not wiser than the Rabbies." "Which means to say," said another gentleman, "that the Rabbies themselves did not know." "Still, we would like to hear your opinion

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about it," they urged Mr. Newman, "even if we do not agree."

"Each one has a right to air his opinion," several remarked, "we are in a free country." "Hear! hear! We all know that you are an unbeliever in such things, a kind of Epicoras." They all laughed good-humouredly. "But we would like to hear some Epicorces (heresy) for a change. Do not spare us." "Gentlemen," said Mr. Newman, "circumcision, according to my opinion, is a transition from human sacrifice to a milder ritual crime. It is a blood sacrifice in a milder form, only the Rabbies have added to it the tearing and sucking. The one is outrageous and wantonly cruel, and the other is most loathsomely disgusting and sickening. The Rabbies know that this added cruelty is often attended by the death of the infant. As we read in 'Yore Deah,' 263. 2: 'If a woman have her first son circumcised, and he die in consequence of the operation because of want of strength, and she causes the second to be circumcised and he die from the same cause, then it is fully made out that her sons died in consequence of the circumcision. And it makes no difference whether they have been by one husband or by two, she is therefore not to have the third circumcised, but to wait until he grows up and his strength increases.' It is clearly proved here by this law that even the Rabbies admit that circumcision may cause death to the little ones. And it is far from being so innocent as it is generally supposed to be.

"Jewish children are being murdered all over the world, directly and indirectly, particularly through the performing of such acts as Preah and Metzitzah, which are most disgusting, barbaric, and cruel. This Rabbinic doctrine of torture has been conjured out of a repetition of a mere word, which means nothing but an emphasis on that particular word. Like 'Moth and Yamoth,' literally 'die, he shall die,' which in English means, "he shall surely die." Why should such

barbarity, such cruel torture be permitted on helpless babies when it often causes their death? When the foreskin is cut away he, the Mohel, takes the operated part, which is an open and bleeding wound, in his mouth and sucks it. Of course," continued Mr. Newman, "I take it for granted that the London Mohel uses occasionally a mouth wash. I will even go further and say he uses a tooth brush, powder or paste, and that he is even a non-smoker. Even then, I consider it most dangerous, because he cannot help having decayed teeth. It is true that the terrible Metztzah (sucking) has been done away with here in London not so very long ago by the late Dr. Adler, and a mechanical instrument has been substituted which does the sucking of the blood, but this is not in accordance with the law; it is but a subterfuge. What about the Jews all over the world who have practised it for centuries? And what about Preah (tearing)? Is this not a terrible torture to the poor bleeding infant? Even after the circumcision, without this Rabbinic torture the child's circumcision would not be considered Jewish, but Mohammedan." "Yes," remarked Mr. Froomberg, who seemed a bit agitated, "you may be right as far as the tearing and sucking is concerned, but what about circumcision itself? Surely there is some compensation from the hygienic standpoint of view and perhaps this was the reason for instituting it."

"The Mosaic law," answered Mr. Newman, "knows nothing about hygienics and has nothing to do with it. It is not true that it has been ordained for such a purpose." "But, indirectly, it has a beneficial influence on the future of the child," said Mr. Froomberg. "We hear frequently that even Gentile children have been circumcised." "Well, what does it prove?" asked Mr. Newman. "It does not prove our case. It simply proves that one particular child has been born with a super-foreskin which had to be removed, like any other abnormality which may happen on any other

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part of the body. It is only an exception and not the general rule. Besides, if circumcision is to improve the health of the child, if it is really so important from the hygienic point of view as some of you wish to make out, why was it not introduced long ago, like vaccination ?

" Why do not doctors, who ought to know better, circumcise their own children or themselves ? " The gentlemen made no reply, so Mr. Newman continued. " It might serve a good purpose in very hot climates to some people, who are not in the habit of keeping themselves clean. The same applies to the eyes and teeth, in fact to the general health. Circumcision is nothing more and nothing less than a pure religious act, a rite from time immemorial, and as such has been treated all along. Of course, our Rabbies have exaggerated the importance of its cult, and its importance extends even beyond the grave. For instance, we are taught, ' If an infant die before circumcision, it is to be circumcised upon its grave, without the benediction, to receive a name, that it may receive mercy from God and be raised up at the resurrection of the dead.'

" Here we learn from our wise men that without circumcision nobody can obtain mercy and have a share in eternal life. Our Rabbies went still further in declaring that circumcision delivers from judgment of hell. For it is said by our wise men that Abraham our father sits at the door of hell and does not suffer anyone who is circumcised to be cast into it." " Well," remarked another gentleman, " whatever the views of our Rabbies concerning circumcision may be, call it superstition or not, the fact remains that circumcision is one of the most important commandments given to Moses, or rather renewed. The penalty for its disobedience is death." " Are you sure," asked Mr. Newman, " that Moses himself was circumcised ? " " Well," answered that gentleman, " he was not, but our tradition explained that he was born circumcised." " It may also be doubted," said another

gentleman, "whether Aaron, the High Priest, and his sons were circumcised. We know it from the Scriptures that from the time that the Children of Israel left Egypt and during their forty years' sojourn in the wilderness the circumcision was discarded altogether. Not until they crossed the Jordan was it renewed, and known in the Scriptures as the 'second circumcision under Joshua' (v. 2-10)."

"But, as far as I understand," said another one, "this circumcision emanates from the time when God made a covenant with Abraham concerning his posterity, and by virtue of circumcision we become Children of the Covenant. Is this not a sufficient reason why we should circumcise our children?"

"Does this not appeal to you, Mr. Newman?" asked the gentleman. "What do we know about that remote age?" asked Mr. Newman in return. "Why should we be influenced by the dealings of a semi-civilized Asiatic, the head of a horde of male and female slaves; a man who had neither character, honour, nor self-respect; a man who could turn out his wife and baby in the wilderness to live or die without sustenance except for a little dry bread and a jug of cold water; a man who twice passed his wife off as his sister, not to save her honour, but to save his own skin; a man who consented to offer his second son as a burnt offering to the God of his dreams, a man whom his own biographers branded as a liar, a coward, and a would-be murderer; a man who lived in a remote age of antiquity; who, after all, may not even have existed, and the whole fabrication concerning whom might be but a myth? Should we of an enlightened age, in the twentieth century, with all our progress and advancement, have to go back and copy the life of a semi-savage, who, as the story goes, entertained angels and God himself, with whom we find him bargaining about the number of righteous men in Sodom, starting with fifty and bringing down the Almighty as low as ten, in the

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same way as our mothers would haggle in the Lane over a fowl to be killed for Sabbath ?

“ He made a covenant with the same God. Now of what consists this covenant ? The covenant consists of this : that God will give to the seed of Abraham the whole land of Canaan. Now, in order to become a member of this covenant, a worthy citizen of Palestine, the aspirant must be initiated. This initiation consists of bringing a bloody sacrifice, and it was prearranged that the blood of a newly-born baby, eight days old, must be shed. What a mockery, what a stupid premium for the naturalization of little ones ! Fancy, if a modern state were to demand such a sacrifice for the right of citizenship, would not the whole civilized world look upon it with horror and condemn it ? And yet you do it for the citizenship of the Holy Land, which you do not even possess. What mockery ! What a desecration ! I, for my part, denounce it as a cruel, savage rite, a religious outrage, and openly denounce any Jewish father who allows his child to be circumcised. If the child dies in consequence of this barbarity, I accuse him as a murderer. If anyone wishes to bring a bloody sacrifice in order to partake of the covenant, by all means let him do it, but let it be on himself, not on this helpless new-born baby, whose consent cannot be asked, and who is unable to defend itself against its tortures.”

The whole company were rather amused than shocked at Mr. Newman's discourse about circumcision, as they expected something worse than this, as he was known to be an Epicoras (heretic) with strange views. “ Well,” said Mr. Cropovski, the head of a well-known tobacco and cigar business, “ of course you know, gentlemen, that I am a broad-minded man and not a fanatic ; you know that I do not keep my religion (besides one cannot be bothered about it nowadays), but I believe in circumcision. In this point I do not agree with Mr. Newman ; I like to remain a Jew.”

"Yes, I confess I am a freethinker," said young Mr. Prachner, junior partner in a large confectionery firm. "I do not keep any of the feasts; my business is such that I cannot keep the Sabbath, I do not believe in it; but still it does cheer me to come home on a Friday night and find the electric lights all lit up and many candles burning. The table looks so invitingly clean, it seems to me that the tablecloth spread on it is whiter than usual. It is so comforting. After all, it reminds one that one is a Jew. But with regard to circumcision, not that I believe in it, but I maintain that it should be kept up from a national point of view."

"Hear! hear! Well, you are right there, Mr. Prachner," said Mr. Krakower, a well-known diamond merchant. "Of course, I would rather see the Sabbath day kept up in my house, but my wife is very modern, and she does not believe in lighting candles and keeping a kosher house; but, of course, we are Jews; we must believe in something. Whatever I do, I keep up Yom Kippur (White Fast). After all, there may be something in it, one never knows. Besides, it does one good to fast one day in the year, even from the hygienic point of view." "Hear! hear!" "But with regard to circumcision, I fully agree with Mr. Prachner; otherwise, what will be the difference between a Jew and a Gentile?" "You know very well that I believe in nothing, I keep nothing, I am an agnostic," said Mr. Allan, a solicitor, "but, after all, one would like to die a Jew. Perhaps there may be something in it, and therefore I believe in circumcision. I would rather like to be buried amongst my own brethren. You know that death is not a child's play." "Hear! hear!"

"Yes, gentlemen, you are perfectly right," said Mr. Dashker, a South African shipper, "you all know that I do not believe in superstition. Of course, I am a man of the world. We must move with the time; I believe in progress. Of course, I have read the 'Riddle of the Universe' and

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many other secular works ; it does not do to remain behind.

" But I should not like that my child should marry a Christian, on account of the question of circumcision, and, I may add as well, ' Kaddish ' (prayer for the dead), although I do not believe in it. But perhaps there is something in it ; if not, I have lost nothing. Besides, I found it so. All my forefathers have done it ; why should I alter it ? What harm does it do ? " " Hear ! hear ! "

They were all looking at Mr. Newman.

" Well, gentlemen," said Mr. Newman, " from what I have heard you have proved yourselves to be worthy sons of the father of the covenant. All your philosophy, broad-mindedness, all your progress and advancement, amounts to this : that you are very superstitious, narrow-minded, very ignorant of your religion, and that you are bad Jews with a bad conscience."

CHAPTER EIGHT.

The Evening Entertainment at the Brith.

AFTER dinner the air became livelier again ; the ladies all came up to see how the patient and baby were progressing, and were all animated and chatting and talking together at one and the same time. It was a real simcha (feast).

The patient, whose attention was divided between the restless baby and the visitors, inquired of them how they enjoyed the dinner.

" Grand," they all assured her. " His Barmitzwah (confirmation) shouldn't be worse," some said.

Mihma Esther entered with other ladies. She looked a bit flushed in the face. " I hope that you were all satisfied,"

Mrs. Froomberg further remarked. "Don't worry," Mrs. Patking assured her, all your life shouldn't be worse." "So it ought to be," remarked Mrs. Froomberg, senior, "considering the money he took for catering." "How did the tables look," inquired Mrs. Froomberg, who seemed to be very anxious that her guests should have plenty of everything. They assured her that it was like at a wedding. "The tables!" exclaimed Mihma Esther, "it was covered with everything good; it was like at the table of Father Abraham!" All the ladies looked at her. "Who were his guests?" asked Mrs. Patking. "A question to ask!" said Mihma Esther. "Who do you think would come to him—tailors, machiners, pressers, butchers, bookies?" "I should think Rabbonim (Rabbies) and Tzadikim (saints)," remarked Mrs. Leibowitz, a visitor, in a strained voice.

Her father was a butcher, and her husband a master-tailor. "More than that," said Mihma Esther, with emphasis, "angels from heaven." "Who? Angels!" ejaculated Miss Freedman. "I should yet see the Barmitzwah* of this little baby that they were real angels." "Why exactly angels?" queried Miss Freedman, "and how many were there?" "Three," answered Mihma Esther. "Why only three?" asked Miss Freedman. "There were three angels," Mihma Esther declared. "Their names were Michael, to announce to Sarah that she will have a son; the second, Raphael, to cure Abraham's Milah; the third, Gabriel, to destroy Sodom. Thus our Rabbies have it by oral tradition, namely, Abraham was sitting at the door of his tent and God had purposely made that the sun should burn on this day very fiercely, this should be a cure for his Milah. There is another reason, our Rabbies say, in our Holy Books. He sat at his door in order to watch for strangers, to invite them into his tent. Therefore God had made the day should be very hot, so

* Confirmation.]

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that no travellers would pass by, in order that Abraham should not be troubled with guests, because he was very weak, it being the third day of his circumcision. But when God saw that Abraham was very much upset because nobody passed by, He therefore sent three angels in human form."

"Did they really eat?" asked Miss Freedman. "Well," said Mihma Esther, "about this our Rabbies didn't come to a decision." "I think," said Mrs. Leibowitz, "if angels come down to earth, they must be hungry; after all, they come from such a long distance." "Well," said Mihma Esther, "some say they eat, but there is another opinion, that they pretended they were eating. From there we can learn," continued Mihma Esther, "that a man should act according to the custom of men."

"Angels do not eat, yet they assume the rôle, as if they were eating," declared Mihma Esther further, with a wise, instructing mien, as one acquainted with the Holy Books. The ladies seemed to have thoroughly enjoyed the bit of Torah (learning) of Mihma Esther, and old Mrs. Froomberg, who was sitting behind her, pointed to her forehead, whilst shaking her head, to express her appreciation of Mihma Esther's wisdom. But the nurse misinterpreted the meaning, and asked afterwards whether she meant to indicate that Mihma Esther wasn't right in her head—to the amusement of some of the ladies present.

After that the ladies dispersed; some remained in the bedroom, but most of them went downstairs; some went in to watch the men play cards, some took up a game of cards; others again spent their time gossiping and criticizing, as we find two of them sitting closely together having what seemed a confidential conversation in a semi-whisper—Mrs. Firebrand and Mrs. Shnaps. "What do you shake your head?" asked Mrs. Shnaps. Mrs. Firebrand sighed. "I can see," she said, "that what more people know who

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to swindle, the better for them ; in fact, people seem to admire them." "What do you mean to say with it?" asked Mrs. Shnaps, wondering a little. "Do you see that woman over there?" pointed Mrs. Firebrand to a tall, stout, fair lady, in silk and diamonds. "You mean Mrs. Bragger?" said Mrs. Shnaps. "Yes," said the other. "Do you see her jewellery that she wears? That's all mine, all bought with my hard-worked money." Mrs. Shnaps looked interested. "Yes," she said. "And you know she made bankrupt a few years ago?" Mrs. Firebrand asked further. Mrs. Shnaps nodded with a knowing look. "And what about the burglary?" she reminded in her turn. "A bad, black year to her life!" said Mrs. Firebrand. "She shouldn't live to see her children to-morrow!" "Well, what about her?" asked Mrs. Shnaps. "Noo, before her husband made bankrupt, we was the best of friends; my husband with her'n go together to the same synagogue, the thief! He brought to us all his valuables, jewellery, and many other things. I always told my husband he is too much of a shlemil (simpleton), too honest in this world. You know what it means," and she sighed again. "After everything was over, and it all went off all right with them, my husband returned to him everything—he shouldn't live to enjoy it—and they got richer than they was before. She doesn't know how rich she is, she shouldn't know of good health! Who was she? A button-hole hand! And now she is a rich madam. Look at her!" She pointed her finger to Mrs. Bragger.

"After his bankrupt," continued Mrs. Firebrand, "we had our misfortune to have a fire." Mrs. Firebrand produced her handkerchief and dried her eyes. Mrs. Shnaps shook her head in sympathy. "Before that," said Mrs. Firebrand, "mine husband received a lot of goods—silk, cloth, linen, and many more things. There was no more room in our warehouse; so mine husband asked Mr.

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Bragger to oblige and store it in his'n—and then our fire happened. It should so burn in their heart and inside (meaning the Braggers) how it burned our everything what was stored there; and after, when mine husband asked them to return our goods, koshera goods, not like his'n, the robber, what do you think he said? 'What goods? When goods? You didn't give me any goods.'

"We was nearly going mad, we had no witnesses and had to shut up. When my husband and me was crying, and told him of the fire and the loss we had, he said we had nothing to grumble, we was insured. Noo, I ask you, will he have a good end? I pray to God that he don't, and God is good; He will listen to me." "Amen. One Jew to another to do such a thing!" Mrs. Shnaps was disgusted. "A Jew to a Jew!" she repeated. "Shocking, as you see me a good Jewish woman." She looked in the direction of Mrs. Bragger. "A Jew!" repeated Mrs. Firebrand, with contempt. "Why he is worse than a Goi (Gentile). I am sure he hasn't a Yiddisha soul in him." "The pious scoundrel, the earth should swallow him up as it did Korah. They should spend it all on doctor's bills and illness. They should yet go begging for bread, and I shall live to see it all, please God!" concluded Mrs. Firebrand in a hopeful tone. Mrs. Shnaps entirely agreed with her. "You tell me about them insurances," she said. "Why, we had some trouble with them; they should be hanged, every one of them. We didn't have a fire for ages, and when my husband built his new warehouse, they refused to insure him. They said they had nothing against my husband, but there was too many fires in that neighbourhood, which is in the East End, and the same they refused many Jews on that account.

"Poor Jews, nebech (alas), they have to suffer; they give a dog a bad name and then they hang him. We are the stone in everybody's way, and yet what will they do without us?" asked Mrs. Shnaps. "Leave me alone with them

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insurances," said Mrs. Firebrand with a wave of her hand. "You are right, as if the Jews alone make fires. A missah meshinah (violent death) on all them companies, they should burn like a candle. Let them all die for my part!"

We leave these two bosom friends pouring out their mutual troubles and confidences to one another and turn our attention to another part of the room, where Mrs. Bragger was the central figure, surrounded by many of the younger guests.

"How is your little Hannah getting on?" asked Jenny Myers, who had arrived for the evening with her brother Joe. "I have not seen her for years." "I am sorry she couldn't come to night," said Mrs. Bragger. "She has an engagement in the west. But you ought to see my Hannala now," said Mrs. Bragger with pride. "She ain't half handsome; she is a beauty, the evil eye be not on her! And she plays pianer like a professor," Mrs. Bragger informed her listeners. "What her eyes see, her hands can do, and you ought to hear her recite pottery, like from a book." Some of the young people could not refrain from smiling. "Then she can dance ten new dances," said Mrs. Bragger, commencing to recount her daughter's accomplishments, "vot-gee-me-call-it-Jazza; she is a grand girl, bless her, perlite, eddicated, and innocent, like a bird," she concluded.

"She must be quite a young lady by now," remarked Jenny, who tried to be serious all the time.

"She is nineteen years, bless her," said Mrs. Bragger.

"Isn't she engaged yet?" asked Joe. "A metziah! plenty of time," said Mrs. Bragger, shrugging her shoulders. "She ain't too much in the house. Children and money, you never have enough, that's what I says. There come plenty of Shadchonim (matchmakers)—who won't be after a girl that gets £2,000 nadan (dowry) and a wedding and a grand home?" She looked round to see the effect her words made on the company, and she was satisfied with the

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result. "She was going out last year with a naval elevator, them officers what fly," said Mrs. Bragger. Joe struggled hard to restrain himself from laughter as he received a nudge in his side from one of his friends at the last remark of Mrs. Bragger's, who continued her information regarding the naval aviator.

"But my husband wouldn't have it, because his family ain't from enough, the same what a Yock*, he said, eats trifah (polluted food), and doesn't keep up the Shabbas. Not for us, no thank you; besides, she could be a widder in no time, when he happens with a flier accident. She didn't go out with him any more."

She was silent for a few minutes. She looked around the room and noticed a rare vase in the corner of the room. "Oh! that's the very thing I need in my droring-room." She pointed to the vase. "You could get them old-fashioned curiosities before the War in the cattle market, where I used to go on a Friday afternoon; but now you can't get it for blood or money."

Here it was announced that Miss Ruby Froomborg, eldest daughter of our hostess, would give a piano recital, accompanied by a young man of the party.

Our little company hailed it with a sigh of relief, the announcement being very much appreciated.

Whilst our guests are enjoying the music, we will pay a flying visit upstairs to the ladies.

They formed little groups; the conversation was carried on very animatedly; they seemed to be spending a delightful evening. "You made a grand change with your house," remarked Mrs. Patking. "What a fine place, a palace!" Whereupon all the ladies agreed. "Really a fine house," they said. "Yes, I am pleased," said Mrs. Froomborg, "but I wish I had remained in my old house over the confinement." "Why?" asked several voices. "It's the

* Gentle.

neighbours," said Mrs. Froomberg. "Are they Goim (Gentiles)?" asked Mihma Esther. "No, that's what upsets me the more," said Mrs. Froomberg. "They are Yidden (Jews). At one side of the house lives a chazon who practises his singing for Rosh Hashanah (New Year). Nurse went in to ask them that *he* should leave off singing. He was quiet for a few days and then started again. At the other side there are greena chayas (animals) from Hackney. They moved here during the raids. Her boys were screaming and throwing the ball outside my window. Nurse went in to ask the mother to keep them quiet; at least to let them play in the garden instead. The mother told the nurse that it's her house, she pays rent for it, and I am too fussy; *she* also had kids." "How vulgar," remarked Miss Freedman. "How do they come to live in such a neighbourhood?" "Don't you know," said Mrs. Froomberg. "Money! They made it somehow in the last few years. You ought to hear her swearing, and what with the kids, it's a scandal. I am ashamed for the Goim, that's the honest truth."

"Yes, I am not surprised," said Miss Freedman, "that in some places, like Hackney and the north, they do not let their houses to Jews. They make them buy them." "But it isn't right for all that," said Mrs. Patking. "Why should there exist such anti-Semitism? A fit on them! After all a Jew ain't a bad customer, especially for the kids."

"I saw a flat advertised in Hackney the other day, where it was stated that Jews and dogs are not wanted. What do you think of them? Pigs, I call them!" concluded Mrs. Patking, quite indignantly. "Well, of course," said Miss Freedman, "this proved that their experience was one-sided. Unfortunately for us they must have come across a vulgar lot like those next door; still, for all that, it is unjust to the majority of Jews. But I can understand some of their reasons," said Miss Freedman. "I know a young woman, who informed me some time ago that her husband

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is going to make her a present of a house ; she also told me that her mother will come and show her how to keep it in proper order.

“ ‘ Why, did not your mother show you to keep this house ? ’ I asked her ; and mind you, she was living in there two years, with only one child, and two maids to help her, and you ought to see the state in which she left the house. ‘ Oh, a metziah ! ’ she said, ‘ why should I bother about it ; it isn’t my own house, ’ ” The ladies had nothing to say to that. “ Well, it’s true,” said Mrs. Leibowitz. “ With kids, bless ’em, it is better to have your own house.” “ How different my former neighbour was ! ” Mrs. Froomberg resumed her interrupted speech. “ I had all my three children in that house, and each time she used to stay with me until nurse arrived and was during the time in every way helpful.”

“ Was she a Yiddisha woman ? ” inquired Mihma Esther. “ No,” said Mrs. Froomberg, “ a Goieshka (Gentile) lady ; that’s just what upsets me to see the difference. She used to send me in a custard pudding every day, and when she went away for a week to the seaside, her daughter did the same.” “ Did you eat it ? Trifah ! ” asked Mihma Esther, horrified.

“ Heaven forbid,” said Mrs. Froomberg. “ I gave it to the shicksa, but it was very nice of her.” “ Yes, there are also good Goim,” some of the ladies agreed. “ You talk about leaving off singing,” Mrs. Leibowitz remarked, “ it reminds me of when I was confined with my Betsy, should live long. I lived in the Stoke Newington Road, near by a Salvation Army Hall. They had there daily prayers and hymn singing. I sent in my child and asked them if they could make it not to sing so loud. What do you think they did ? They left off singing altogether for a whole week, and one of the officers came in afterwards to inquire about my health and added that they prayed for my recovery and

that God may bless me. I did laugh." The ladies laughed with her. "As if I believe in their Jesus!" said Mrs. Leibowitz. "But still, poor people, they meant it good." "Awfully decent of them," remarked Miss Freedman. "I should think so," said Mrs. Patking.

"Just like my neighbours," remarked Mrs. Froomberg, ironically. "I have a better tale to tell," said another lady.

"My cousin lives in Settle Street, Commercial Road, and told me that she knows a woman who lives there that was very ill, and it happens that she lives near a church—I believe High Church they call it. The people sent in to the church asking that they should stop ringing the church bells, as it upsets the patient, which the church people did for her, I believe, for over a week. One day, she told my cousin, there was a knock at the door and, if you please, in walked a tall, big man. She looked up in surprise. 'I am the doctor, my name is So-and-so!' I won't mention his name, but you all know him; he lives in the Mile End Road. He said to her, 'I am a member of the church next door, and I asked the reason why the church bells are silent, and I was informed of your illness, so I came in to pay you a visit.'

"He stayed some time and examined her." "Did she pay?" asked Miss Freedman. "And I don't think!" answered the lady; "no fear, not him, he wouldn't have it." "Well, if that ain't the latest!" said Mrs. Patking. "Very good of him, a fine Yoickle, I must say."

"Yes," said Mihma Esther, with a sigh, "good Goim; it's for such ones as that our exile is prolonged."

"I had some fun with my charwoman the other day," remarked another lady visitor. "She came in one morning and looked quite important. 'Well, Mary Ann, what's the matter?' I asked her. 'Oh, mum!' she explained, 'I did have a surprise yesterday.' 'What was it?' I asked. 'I happened to pass a side street,' she said, 'and I saw two

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Jewesses fighting, and they didn't half have a go at it. Lor' bless us. I could understand it with our people,' she said, 'but yours! Fancy that,' she said, 'Jewesses was actually fighting, and the likes of them don't drink, do they mum?' I couldn't help smiling at her astonishment. 'It couldn't have been our people,' I said to her, 'they must have been English or Dutch Jewesses. We use our tongues, but we never lift up a hand to fight,' 'You mean you cuss?' she asked. 'Yes,' I said, 'we use our tongue, but we don't harm anybody with it, do we?' 'That you don't mum,' she said. 'We ain't afraid of cussing, it don't give the black eye, do it mum? But it do look strange for Jewesses to fight,' she added, and she couldn't get over it all day."

"It must have been some fight, I suppose," said Mrs. Patking, laughing. They all laughed with her.

"So did I hear some fun about a charwoman," said Miss Freedman. The ladies wished to hear it. "You know Miss Rebecca Elfenbein, a friend of mine? She comes of a very religious family, and she herself is an excellent, good girl, but strictly religious. They observe the Sabbath day in their house, in the real sense of the word; she not only does not break the Sabbath, but she doesn't even ask the Sabbath Goie to do it for her. When they engage a Goie (charwoman) they tell her what her duties would consist of on a Sabbath—to light the fire, keep it up, take off the candlesticks and many more things which a Jew is forbidden to do on that day. On one occasion she and her sister went out for a walk on a Sabbath day, and they went for a very long distance up west. Towards the evening they felt too tired to walk home, and being Sabbath they didn't carry any money on them. They were in a fix; what could they do? They hit upon an idea. They went up to a policeman on duty and told him their trouble, that they are religious and must not carry money on Sabbath. The man was of a

religious nature himself and sympathized with them; he lent them one shilling. They took his address and returned it to him promptly, with thanks." "Such a good year on me!" said Mihma Esther. "How nice it is to hear it, nothing like good Yiddishkeit (Judaism)."

"So," continued Miss Freedman, "once on a Sabbath afternoon my friend was dying to have a cup of tea. To ask the charwoman direct was against her principles, so she started with politics. 'Mary,' she said, 'are you thirsty?' 'No, Miss,' said Mary. It didn't work. After a while, she asked again. 'Mary, don't you feel for a cup of tea?' 'Well, Miss,' said Mary, 'I wouldn't mind to have one, but I wants to finish my work first.' She failed again. She tried anew after some time. 'Mary, isn't it tea-time?' 'Not yet, Miss, but would you like to have one made for you?' Well, that wouldn't do; it would mean ordering it direct, my friend thought, the very thing she wished to avoid. 'Oh, no, thank you,' she said. 'Well,' said Mary, 'I wouldn't think of making one special for me if you won't have one,' And the poor girl had to go without tea."

Mihma Esther sighed. "The Jew, nebech (alas)," she said, "must suffer. A Goieshka head after all does not understand a gesheft (business)."

"I had an affair with my Shabbas Goie. I tell you it was no joke to me at that time," said Mrs. Leibowitz. "One Sabbath morning I came down rather late, and I expected my husband home from Synagogue soon, so I thought I would arrange the table quickly. To my surprise, all the silver candlesticks were on the table—there were seven in number, one for each kid—as you know how particular I am in lighting them on a Friday night and to say that customary prayer over them. What was to be done? We must not touch them, and the Sabbath charwoman had not turned up yet. I was in a fix. Meantime my husband arrived and brought with him a guest for dinner.

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"I was in for it properly, you bet. I told my husband of my trouble. The guest heard it, he was a very fromm (religious) man, and asked, "What! your shicksa ain't here? That's nothing! The candlesticks you mustn't touch yourself, that's true." He took hold of the four corners of the table-cloth, gathered up the candlesticks in it, and placed it on the floor in a corner of the room, where he left them, together with the table-cloth," concluded Mrs. Leibowitz. "What! on a Shabbath?" some one asked in surprise.

"For why not," said Mihma Esther, "the man acts within the law. It's not for nothing they say that where there is learning there is wisdom."

The Mohel came up to see to the baby. It was a sign for general leave-taking, which they subsequently did, amidst great noise and excitement, wishing one another all sorts of good wishes.

"Please God by you!" said Mihma Esther. "Please God!" said Mrs. Patking, and they all left.

CHAPTER NINE.

A Barmitzwah (Confirmation) Party at Mr. and Mrs. Paisterman's.

TO-DAY is the confirmation feast of Morris Paisterman. He had been prepared for this great event by Rabbi Oldman, to whom was due Master Paisterman's success in the synagogue. He very ably read the portion of the law in Hebrew in the usual sing-song fashion before the whole congregation, to the delight of his beaming parents.

It was the Rabbi, too, who instructed him concerning the Phylacteries, which he had put on for the first time only a

few days previously, thus becoming visibly a Son of the Law. This Rabbi Oldman was a simple-minded, God-fearing, and intensely religious man, well versed in Talmudic Law. He had a great and beneficial influence over the Paisterman family. It had been the good fortune of Mr. Paisterman to meet the old Rabbi when, a few years earlier, he had come to England a poor struggling tailor.

He became the old man's disciple, looking up to him reverently both for his piety and his deep knowledge in Jewish learning. He himself, however, being a simple, hard-working man had little or no Jewish learning, although his father, who had been an ardent Chassid, had given him the requisite religious upbringing. He therefore availed himself of his Rabbi's knowledge, the latter becoming the spiritual guide.

Needless to say, Mr. Paisterman never forgot his teacher at Passover so far as motzos (unleavened cakes), kosher wine, and other seasonable viands went ; nor at any other of the many festivals of the year. He often paid the old man's rent, and otherwise assisted him during the year by means of " Pedian," or Thanksgiving.

Mrs. Paisterman was equally worthy as her husband. Previous to their marriage she had been one of Paisterman's most loyal workers, distinguishing herself through her zeal and the interest she took in his business. For this he made her, first, forewoman, and then—better half. She was of the same humble origin, and could neither read nor write ; but, if charity covers a multitude of sins, her good-heartedness, her charitable disposition, her clean and tidy habits, were ample compensation for her lack of education.

After years of hard work Paisterman became a South African shipper of clothing, with large, well-established workshops. At outbreak of war, with the scarcity of tailors, he and his partner were able to undertake khaki work on a grand scale, so that now he is a rich man.

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To return now to the Confirmation.

After the Synagogue service, a party of relatives and friends were invited home for dinner.

Water for ablution having been brought in according to the law, the company sat down to the table after the necessary saying of grace.

Dinner started, and between the courses there was the usual chanting known as Simarabs, and after the grace, when all was over, the Rabbi, who occupied the place of honour, stood up—a sign that he was going to say Torah, as befitted the occasion.

The conversations suddenly ceased and they all looked expectantly at the Rabbi, who had turned towards the boy, and hero of the feast, and addressed him in a fatherly way in Yiddish, which in English would run as follows :

“ THE RABBI'S EXHORTATION.

“ My son, permit me on this exceptional occasion, which is the turn-point in your life, to draw your attention to what should be your greatest epoch. To-day, for the first time, my son, you had the privilege to put on the Tephillin (phylacteries), which is the crown of Israel. To-day you have become a Barmitzwah (son of the law). Do you realize the great responsibility which you have taken over? Do you know the many privileges which a Barmitzwah carries with it? And, no less, the terrible consequence for its disloyalty and neglect?

“ Have you an idea what terrible punishments await you in the world to come if you but once omit to fulfil this great Commandment, and, on the other hand, the great reward if you, as a good Jew, faithfully discharge this duty in your daily morning prayers? I hardly believe you do!

“ From this great hour when your father pronounced the significant words ‘ Baruch Shepatrani,’ and from that moment when you put on the Tephillin, you alone have become responsible to God for all your doings, and the responsibility,

A CONFIRMATION PARTY.

my dear boy, is very great. I do wish you would realize what it means to be responsible not only for your deeds, but for your secret thoughts. Remember, He, blessed be His Name, looks into the very heart and knows the secret thoughts of all living beings. From Him nothing is hidden.

"My son, as a Barmitzwah, let me impress upon you, you have many privileges. You are henceforth entitled to form part of a Minian (quorum of ten). Without you to make the quorum, no open congregational prayer can be said, no religious ceremony can be performed; the holy Torah cannot be read without you. Kaddish, that important prayer for the dead, can only be said when there is a Minian, of which you form a part. There are many other great functions of the Synagogue which could not be performed without your presence. Don't forget the great reward attached to such privileges. I assure you, my dear son, to be a Barmitzwah is not to be trifled with. Your position is now a high and exalted one; you have to a certain extent become the arbiter between life and death. Hell and heaven are now placed in your hands, and it is for you and for you alone to choose, my son, and I do pray you may choose rightly. May the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, bless you abundantly, your parents, and all Israel. Amen." The Rabbi sat down.

Miss Brunin, who was strongly moved by the Rabbi's earnestness, stood up and asked if the Rabbi would permit her to put a question to him, as she was most desirous to have more light about the subject. The Rabbi answered, "Speak, daughter, what is your difficulty?" "I am not a scholar in Jewish learning. We Jewish maidens are not instructed in the Holy Law or matters concerning our Jewish religion; the Rabbies have forbidden it, as my father once said. I therefore know as much of our religion as many a daughter of Israel, which means next to nothing, except in matters of food and crockery, which make up the

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religion of our women. I am therefore not ashamed to own my ignorance ; but at the same time I also admit my eagerness to learn. I was very much impressed with your address to our little hero ; I must say that I was very much touched and very agreeably surprised to hear for the first time what a Barmitzwah really means ; but I cannot help thinking all the time how strange it is, how extraordinarily strange, that little Morris, a mere child of hardly thirteen years, should suddenly become such a big authority, especially in matters of vital importance, of which he is totally innocent. It is, indeed, very strange that a child should suddenly be burdened with such a terrible responsibility.

“ It is not less surprising when one considers the great privileges attached to such dignity ; but can a child of such tender years really realize all this ? His very presence, as we have heard, is indispensable in matters of great religious functions and ceremonies.

“ Suppose, for the sake of argument, there is a very pressing case—a case of the greatest emergency. And if our little Morris is missing to make up the Minian, but there are present a goodly number of ladies well known for their piety and great charity—ladies whose whole lives have been devoted to the noble cause of Israel ; I mean really pure and saintly women of the highest standard—could they serve for the time being as a substitute for our little Morris ? I wish to emphasize, in a case of extraordinary emergency.”

“ No ! ” said the Rabbi emphatically, “ not all the noble women of Israel combined together, past, present, and future, can replace this little boy. His authority and rights are absolute in this respect. He is a Barmitzwah, and that is a matter of no small importance. Females can never aspire to such a privilege, to such dignities, and to such honours.”

The Rabbi sat down, and Miss Brunin thanked him cordially for his learned exposition and expressed a hope

that in the future she might have the opportunity to hear more about the Tephillin themselves.

The Rabbi said to her that her curiosity would soon be appeased as he intended to speak about the Tephillin (Phylacteries) that very afternoon for the benefit of all. Soon afterwards the Rabbi addressed himself to our little gathering as follows :

“ I wish to say something about the Tephillin on this appropriate occasion. Although this subject is so very great and profound, yet I will try to convey to my listeners, as far as possible, this very subject which distinguishes the Jewish nation from all other nations. The precept Tephillin does not begin with our Master, Moses. We have it by tradition that our Patriarchs wore Tephillin ; nay, He, blessed be His Name, is wearing Tephillin. Moses, our Law-giver, as our Rabbies have transmitted to us, saw the ‘ knot ’ of the Tephillin, the ‘ Kaysher,’ at that memorable occasion when the Lord showed him His glory (Exod. xxxiii. 23) : ‘ and thou shalt see My back parts ’ ; there Moses saw the ‘ Kaysher ’ of the Tephillin.

“ This question is dealt with more exhaustively in our oral Law. In one place we read, ‘ Rabbi Abbim, the son of Rabbi Adda, says in the name of Rabbi Isaac, from where is it proved that the holy and blessed God wears Phylacteries ? ’ The answer was from the passage where it is said, ‘ The Lord has sworn by his right hand, by the arm of His strength ’ (Is. lxii. 8). His right hand means the Law, for it is said, ‘ From his right hand went a fiery Law for them ’ (Deut. xxxiii. 2).

“ The arm of his strength means ‘ Phylacteries ’—for it is said, ‘ The Lord will give might unto His people ’ (Ps. xxix. 11). But whence is it proved that Phylacteries are the strength of Israel ? From the passage where it is written, ‘ And all the people of the earth shall see that the name of the Lord is called upon thee ! ’ (Deut. xxviii. 10), the question

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was naturally raised, 'What is written in the Lord's Phylacteries?' Our Rabbies have dealt with this question and explained that 'there the Jewish nation is exalted above other nations.' "

The Rabbi continued in his instructive exposition. "There are three commandments that designate the Jew: the circumcision (a sign in the flesh), the Sabbath, and the Tephillin. The Tephillin are the crown of Israel in its beauty, therefore our Rabbies never ventured out further than four yards without their Tephillin on their heads. Many ascribe the cause of their longevity to the Tephillin, as the Talmud said. Rabbi Rash has taught that the one who 'lays' Tephillin will live long; he who wears the name of God, which the Tephillin on his head contains, will be awaked at the resurrection of the dead. A man who prays to God without putting on his Tephillin in the morning puts himself in the same position as a false witness, and has as many sins as days in the week when missing putting on the Tephillin for his morning prayer; and his punishment will be accordingly as many numbers of days. To begin with, the Tephillin, their construction, form, and use is taught in the Shulchan Aruch, which I advise everybody to make study of, and I will be very glad, if any difficulty arise concerning its meaning, to explain.

"Never should a Jew dare to leave his house without having put on his Tephillin, according to the rules and regulations of the Shulchan Aruch, as the omission of one commandment may lead to the omission of others, and so on to eternal condemnation," the Rabbi concluded.

Here Miss Brunin put another question to the Rabbi, and said, "Surely, Rabbi, according to your explanation, even God Himself 'lays' Tephillin, which presupposes that He prays. I hope you will not take this, my ignorant question, as blasphemy; but I should like to know, if He does pray, to whom does He pray?" "Oh, no, my daugh-

ter," answered the Rabbi, "to ignoramus it may appear strange, on account of their perverted idea of God, and to those who are not acquainted with our true religion. God does pray! In 'En Yacob' (Fol. 8, Col. 1) we find thus written, 'Rabbi Yochanan, in the name of Rabbi Yosé Ben Zimra, says, "Whence is it proved that the holy and blessed God prays?" From the passage where it is said, 'Even them will I bring to My holy mountain; and make them joyful in My house of prayers' (literally, in the house of My prayers).

"The verse does not say their prayer, but My house of prayer, and hence it is proved that the holy and blessed God prays. What does He pray? Rabbi Zutra Bar Tobiah says the prayer is as follows:

"'May it be well pleasing before Me that My mercy conquer My wrath, and My mercy prevail over My attributes, and that I conduct Myself towards My children according to the attribute of mercy, and deal with them better than according to the strict demands of justice.' According to the tradition, Rabbi Ishmael, the son of Elisha, said, 'I once went in to burn incense in the Holy of Holies and I saw Achtariel (a cabalistic name for God), the Lord of Hosts, sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and He said to me, "Ishmael, my son, bless Me." I said to Him, "May it be well pleasing before Thee, that Thy mercy conquer Thy wrath and Thy mercy prevail over Thine attributes, and that Thou conduct Thyself towards Thy children according to the attributes of mercy, and that Thou deal with them better than according to the strict demands of justice." He shook His head to me in approbation, and from hence we may learn not to despise the blessing even of an unlearned man.'"

The Rabbi finished his discourse. "What a pity," said Mr. Paisterman, "that poor Mr. Barnett Cohen is not here."

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The guests, after the Rabbi's grace, left the table, and the ladies and gentlemen formed little groups discussing the learning of the Rabbi. They were all delighted with it.

"Well, Miss Brunin?" asked our host. "What do you think of our Rabbi's wonderful Torah? A pity! he would have said many more wonderful things; but, you see, there were too many women present, who would not understand him." "And I think the men, too. I wonder if they understand?" remarked Mrs. Paisterman. "Yes, I am glad he did not say more about it," said Miss Brunin. "How is that, Miss Brunin?" asked Mr. Paisterman, "did you not enjoy it? I think it was grand," he assured her. "Well, it was undoubtedly strange," retorted Miss Brunin. "It seems you don't agree with the views of our Rabbi's exposition," remarked Mr. Paisterman. "Oh! please do not take it in that way," said Miss Brunin. "Here is not a question whether I agree or disagree. I am not a competent person to judge or air my opinion on such grave matters.

"Our worthy Rabbi is an authority, he knows what he is speaking about, his references are undoubtedly correct. He speaks on high authority. I must admit everything he said appeared to me so strange, so incomprehensible, so at variance from my own conception concerning the divine personality."

"I told you," remarked Mrs. Paisterman, "that it would tax wiser people's brains than ours to understand the sacred writings of our profound and learned Rabbies." "Undoubtedly so," Miss Brunin admitted, "but it seems to me——" Mr. Paisterman interrupted her. "I know what puzzles you. You wonder that God wears Phylacteries and recites prayers, but why wonder at it? Have you not read in Gen. iii. 21, 'Unto Adam also and his wife did the Lord God make coats of skin and clothed them.' Here God

is represented as a tailor, why be ashamed of it? The Christians don't mind a bit if their God was a carpenter. Don't take such matters to heart, Miss Brunin, they needn't upset you."

"Yes," said Mrs. Paisterman, "let us leave it to great Rabbies, they know better. Come, let us go and inspect the presents rather," and they all went into the next room.

There was a display of all sorts of articles, useful or otherwise, several pairs of gloves, tie pins, gold links, cameras, silver-mounted sticks, books, etc. Also many cheques, one from their partner's wife, Mrs. Trooper, and a simple Tephillin bag with a blessing in Hebrew worked by his nurse, accompanied by a poem written in Hebrew.

The guests were then invited for the following evening for the reception.

CHAPTER TEN.

The Evening Reception of the Barmitzwah.

ON the following day we find Mr. and Mrs. Paisterman receiving their numerous friends and visitors. There were nearly the whole congregation from the Synagogue; everybody was eager to come and wish Mazol Tov, being sure of getting a cordial reception from our host and hostess. The ladies, as usual, were magnificently attired, all sparkling with diamonds and jewellery. After the greetings were over, the ladies joined company according to their choice, while the men were joining hands at the card tables.

In the drawing-room there was music, and the conversations were very animated everywhere, interrupted now and again by our hostess, who, with the help of a number of obliging young ladies, was incessantly offering refreshments.

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In one particular circle the conversation was very lively. One of the speakers was Mrs. Cursman, a tall, stout woman with a loud voice, near whom was seated a very slim young lady in an expensive gown—quite a “creation.” She was her daughter, Mrs. Phillips, married only a few weeks before.

“Yes,” continued Mrs. Cursman. “I know about the wedding; we are also invited; it will be at Caxton Hall. Of course, like Mrs. Bragger, she must go to them kind of places.”

“They say it is going to be something extraordinary,” said Mrs. Millstein. “She told me that the meat alone costs them £100.”

Mrs. Cursman laughed mockingly. “That’s again like Mrs. Bragger; since she told me about the meat she has increased the amount with £20.”

They all laughed. “A metziah!” she said. “What is it? And if my Lily’s wedding was at the Finsbury Park Town Hall, believe me, it has costed me more than her, and yet who is going to show off? After all, for what is it done, them big weddings? For the presents,” she assured them. “You may believe me, I haven’t taken out in presents half the money what the wedding has costed me.”

“You are right, mamma,” said her daughter. “The Kruskys came seven in family, which costed me two guineas a couple, and what do you think was their presents? A pair of silver flower vases, which, I am sure, hasn’t costed them £2.” “Of course, mamma,” remarked her daughter, “the Bragger’s were not piggish, their present must have costed them about £10.” “That’s only to show off,” again assured them Mrs. Cursman. “I knows her, she wants to show she can afford to spend all that money; besides, she knows that she’ll get it back at her Hannah’s wedding.”

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You leave it to her, she has a head on her shoulders." "Who is she marrying?" asked Mrs. Millstein. "According to Mrs. Bragger, he is very rich and well educated." "Oh, my!" screamed Mrs. Cursman and her daughter. "I am dying for laughter," said Mrs. Phillips. "If Mrs. Bragger is the connoisseur on education, then he must be indeed very much so."

They laughed. "Still, you must admit," remarked Miss Freedman, "that Hannah is a very well-spoken girl." "Oh, yes," said Mrs. Phillips, "so she is when she assumes her affected speech and artificial manners, but she soon shows she is Mrs. Bragger's daughter. We had a fine joke at my wedding. As you know, there was plenty to eat, even to satisfy the appetite of Bragger's family."

"After dinner she came up to the cloak room, and my cousin Susie remarked, 'What a fine dinner it was!' 'Yes, it was nice; I had an elegant sufficiency of it.' Then she added, 'I ate so much, I feel I am busting.' They all burst out laughing again. "I hear your son will soon get married," inquired Mrs. Goldstone of Mrs. Cursman. "Yes," said Mrs. Cursman, who did not seem very enthusiastic over it. "A nice girl," said Mrs. Millstein, "quite a lady." "Yes, she is very ladylike," agreed Mrs. Goldstone, "and pretty. I admit that your son has taste."

"What's the good of it," replied Mrs. Cursman, "when she is a poor girl? He takes her without a penny. In fact, he has to make the wedding and the home. He could have had tahsands of pahnds, but he says he loves her. A metziah with love! I never didn't have the same luck with mine Lily. We had to make the wedding and the home and give money, but, of course, there was his mother. The old witch has had to be satisfied. She said if her son doesn't get all that, it won't be the match. What then?" she added. "Like me? Where will you find such a mother-in-lor as me?"

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"Well, mamma," remarked her daughter, "Lewis is different, he doesn't ask you or anybody else, he simply does as he likes. He says he is independent ; he loves the girl and he will marry her." "I carried on enough," started Mrs. Cursman anew, "but him, he didn't care ; it's all over now." "I am really pleased to hear," said Miss Freedman, "that there are young men of that calibre amongst us. You hear nowadays so much about money matches that you think that there is no more love left."

"Oh, Miss Freedman, you are still single, you are romantic ; wait till you are married," said Mrs. Goldstone, "and you will see the importance of money. Love is all very well ; besides, I don't believe in love. You get used to one another. Even if you don't love the husband at first, you can't help liking him afterwards, when he is so good to you and tried to give you everything you wish for." "You can't eat love," remarked Mrs. Cursman. "We know about it," said Mrs. Millstein. "When poverty enters the door, love flies out through the window. "Never mind about love in a cottage ; you give me ten thousand pounds and a house in Hampstead," was the opinion of Mrs. Phillips.

"Well, ladies, I admit," Miss Freedman confessed, "as a single girl I am not experienced in all that. But, Mrs. Goldstone, you say that you get used to the husband and you cannot help liking him when he gives you everything you wish for. Suppose he has not the means and yet he tries hard ; what then ? Wouldn't you love him just the same, even for his trying to satisfy you ? After all, the goodwill is there. 'It isn't the gift which makes the giver, but the will,' says Lessing," concluded Miss Freedman. "Oh," said Mrs. Cursman, "mine daughters needn't worry about that. Mine husband has for her a diary and a 'dowment (dowry and endowment) which is on her name and she can draw the money whenever she likes ; she needn't

ask her husbind for it, thank God. They are difference bringed up."

"Yes," said Mrs. Phillips, "my husband brought me a cheque book for my own use."

"Good evening, ladies!" Joe Myers came up to the group. "Are you short of some fun? I came to show my face; a good laugh does one good in these days." They were all laughing. Mrs. Cursman slapped him. "Get away you rascal." "I had some amusement," said Joe. "I saw just now Mr. Klums, the wholesale china dealer, and Mr. Bragger in conversation, and I heard them having a confidential business chat." "If it was confidential, how do you know about it?" asked Miss Freedman, smiling. "Of course, like Joe," said Mrs. Cursman, "pokes his nose in everywhere; if he ain't there the business is no business."

"Mrs. Cursman, you do give me some character, I say," laughed Joe. "I hope you won't spoil my match," he added.

"What was they talking about?" asked Mrs. Cursman. "Well, Mrs. Cursman, if it were confidential, it would be wrong that I should impart a secret not belonging to me; but as it happens you know the genteel voices of the two gentlemen concerned, so that I heard it a mile away."

"Will you come out with your important secret or not?" demanded Miss Freedman.

"Yes," he began. "I heard Mr. Klums shout to Mr. Bragger, 'I say, what about your Yudela, he must be a fine fellow now?' 'You mean my Julius!' corrected Bragger. 'A business!' says Klums. 'Let it be Julius. Them children, they are ashamed of their Yiddisher names nowadays. I? I care much! My name was Chatzkel Klums when I came to London without a penny to bless me, and now my children have taught me to write Chatzkel on my cheques. Klums even ain't necessary. And you

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ought to see the sums that it signs ! ' He laughed aloud, looking around the room.

" Then he went on, ' I have a daughter Getel ; they call her Gertie now. I think it can be a shidduch with them, what do you say ? ' "

" Bragger was cautious with his reply. ' You know,' he said, after a while, ' my Julius is as good as a partner in my business,' and looked at Klums meaningly.

" ' Noo, what about it ? ' asked Klums. ' Go on, make a bid ! How much do you want ? ' "

" ' I ain't selling a horse,' returned old Bragger. ' Besides, it's me who has the goods, and you are the buyer ; how much you can give ? ' " Miss Freedman was very amused. " ' Name the sum,' said Bragger, ' and we'll see. And don't forget,' he added, ' you must know who we are. Mine wife comes from a family which has had an uncle who lived many years ago ; he has written a great book which was mentioned in them great English dictionaries, Encyclopædia Britanica.' He made a mess of the poor Encyclopædia," added Joe amidst the laughter of some of the ladies, especially of Mrs. Cursman. " ' Oh, I heard quite a lot about that family ghost,' said Klums, ' and I wants to buy mineself into Jewish haristrocracy. I have the cash for it, for why not ? ' " "

" A nice haristrocracy," remarked Mrs. Cursman. " ' My Julius is not an ordinary young man,' said Bragger again, ' his eddication costed me enough.' ' Name the sum,' urged Klums, ' and I will pay for the eddercation too ; besides, a few hundred more or less ain't the question, and if you would see mine Gertie, you wouldn't be so partickler about the price.' "

" ' I shall speak to my wife,' said Bragger." " It is them kind of people that have the luck with their children. What then, like my Lewis ? I have nothing to say in it," Mrs. Cursman sighed. A young, good-looking girl came up

to the group with refreshments. They all partook of some, while Joe paid her a compliment which pleased her, for she went away laughing.

"Who is she?" asked Mrs. Cursman. "That's Mrs. Trooper's sister," said Mrs. Phillips; "you see her there, she is the good-looking woman." "Wasn't she going out with Grindeler?" asked Mrs. Goldstone. "I also heard it," affirmed Mrs. Millstein. "I believe they were going to be engaged; at least that's what her parents and sister were thinking of," she added with a wink. "What!" exclaimed Mrs. Phillips. "Not him, he wouldn't take her." "Why?" asked Joe. "She is certainly a good-looking girl; she is like her sister." "Oh, yes," said Mrs. Phillips, "her sister's husband was different, he wasn't a man of the world, without education. Grindeler is of a different cut. He has seen some women in his time, you bet. He told my husband, in confidence, that she was too much made up for his liking; besides, being a self-made man, who doesn't look out for money, he wanted at least an accomplished girl of a good family." "Gee! he wants something for his cash," remarked Joe.

"It is remarkable," said Miss Freedman, "that when a rich girl marries a poor man, or if she is of a better family than he, she never forgets the fact and lets him feel it, and the same is with the man." Mrs. Phillips did not like the remark, remembering her brother's affair, and tried to turn the conversation. "Yes," she said, "so after Mr. Grindeler had spoken about accomplishments, my friend, Mrs. Miller, told me that she found her once practising 'Smallwood' on the piano. I dare say she wanted to complete her education," she added mockingly, "but she started a bit too late."

"I also started learning the piano after I was married," said Mrs. Millstein, "but when the kids came along, bless them, I soon dropped it, and what I have learned I dare say

I have forgotten." " Oh, I couldn't be bothered," remarked Mrs. Goldstone, " my nerves are too bad ; it is enough for me to hear the kids practising."

" Well, ladies," remarked another lady of the party, who had been a silent listener all the time—she was a young, nice looking woman, fashionably but neatly dressed, and her name was Mrs. Rowland—" talking about musical accomplishments ; when I got married, my husband bought a bargain, an excellent piano, which cost him a good bit of money. I asked him what is the sense of buying a piano ? He said that a drawing-room without a piano is like a queen without a crown, and, besides, it doesn't ask for food. When we will have children we will not have to buy one then. I thought to myself I might as well make use of it since it is there ; besides, I was also longing to learn piano. My husband was absent all day, and I had plenty of time on my hands. I started taking lessons, and, knowing the importance of practising, I used to do it for four hours daily for fully two and a half years. It was very hard work, but I was determined to know it." " You'll catch me doing that," remarked Mrs. Phillips.

" Well," said Mrs. Rowland, " I wished to know it, and after my baby was born I resumed it again. I had plenty of time to practise when baby was asleep." " But you must have missed a lot of going out," interrupted Mrs. Millstein. " Of course I did, and a lot of gossip, too," laughed Mrs. Rowland, " but I had my own pleasure in it and I was fully recompensed in the long run." " Of course, you can play," remarked Miss Freedman, who was a fine player herself. " Ah, but that was not all. I asked my teacher to give me some difficult music, and I practised it thoroughly, till I could play it off with ease, so that when after I got hold of lighter music I could play it by sight without any effort.

"Once we were at a party, and they were having some music. Some of the ladies who were known to play were very fussy when approached, and excused themselves; they said that they were not in a mood to play, and another was banging at the piano with some ragtime tunes very noisily, and there was nobody else in the room who could play the piano.

"I said I thought that I would play. The company were very pleased, and my husband became curious; he was puzzled, he thought perhaps I was joking. I sat down at the piano and began to play some Schumann and Mendelssohn music which I had practised very well and with which I was quite at home. I dare say the people were pleased with it after the rag-noise, and they encored me over and over again.

"But now, you ought to have seen my husband's face! His astonishment and delight were indescribable. He was so pleased that he actually came up to me and embraced and kissed me in the presence of everybody," she added with a pretty smile. "Oh!" exclaimed Mrs. Phillips. "When we came home," resumed Mrs. Rowland, "my husband said, 'Well, Nellie, you have given me a pleasant surprise, I didn't know you could play so well.' Of course, to him it appeared grand," she added, "but I wouldn't give the game away, and I said, 'Well, my dear, I did know how to play the piano long before I knew you, but I didn't want you to take me for my accomplishments, but for myself.' He was so glad that he bought me a set of furs and muff, worth more than a hundred pounds, saying, 'You surprised me, and I am giving you a surprise now,' and since then, whenever he is at home, he knows of no greater pleasure than to listen to my playing. He has little favourite tunes and he is never tired of listening to them."

"I wouldn't have the patience to stick," remarked Mrs. Phillips. "And I wouldn't put up with it," said Mrs. Millstein, a bit cross.

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"But why not," asked Mrs. Rowland. "as long as I see that it makes him happy? and to make my husband happy is worth to me everything."

Just then her husband entered with another gentleman, bowed smilingly, and said, "Madam, you are requested to play," and gave her his arm. She got up laughing, and he conducted her to the piano, the other ladies following her. She began a prelude with very practised fingers, one could see, and played a few nice simple songs, her husband's favourites. She played them with ease and grace, and finally played some classical music, which was very much appreciated. She was encored several times.

"Can't you see," whispered Mrs. Phillips to Mrs. Millstein, with envy in her voice, "she must have practised jolly hard to play it so nicely." "I dare say she practised purposely in order to be applauded," remarked Mrs. Millstein, who looked a bit sheepish. "Never mind," said Miss Freedman, "practice or no practice, she plays well and she deserves the applause."

CHAPTER ELEVEN.

The Engagement Party of Miss Dinah Elfenbein.

A VERY important event takes place to-day in the house of Mr. Baruch Elfenbein, namely, the engagement of his youngest daughter, Dinah. In order fully to realize the significance of the affair, we are obliged to acquaint the reader with the circumstances and difficulties preceding the happy event.

Mr. Baruch Elfenbein was a successful city merchant dealing in wool and cloth, who during the War was blessed abundantly and, of course, belonging to the *nouveaux riches*,

left the East End to change it for a seaside resort, where he bought a mansion in a fashionable quarter. The happiness of the family Elfenbein would be complete if it were not for that abominable Income Tax. He was a specimen of those Jews who, in spite of their prosperity, remain the same in both taste and habits. He was a man of strictly orthodox views, with an utter contempt for modern civilization and social progress. For years, ever since the time when he had been in less prosperous circumstances, he had attended a small kind of Synagogue, hidden away somewhere in the East End, where he used to study the Talmud together with men of the same humble extraction with a view that in the future world great reward should await him. So convinced is he of the fact that even now, in spite of being a rich man, he still retains his external appearance in matters of dress and adheres to that obscure congregation, perhaps more from force of habit apart from preferring the old company to his new acquaintances. Even on his daily journeys from his home to London he never omitted his prayers in the train. His singularity and abrupt manners were not only excused, but rather ascribed to his being original and of an independent mind. Altogether he was a man who belonged rather to the remote Babylonian age, living in that old civilization by constantly nourishing his mind with its literature composed in Babylon by the Rabbies. He was a strict Sabbatarian ; he never ventured out of his house on Saturday, which day he spent, as a good Jew is enjoined to, in feasting, chanting between the courses, sleeping after dinner, and then praying and perusing the Holy Books. His wife, Mrs. Elfenbein, was one of the old-fashioned, simple-minded Jewish women, a splendid cook, who took particular pride in the baking of the Sabbath cake, a pastry in the making of which she was a past-master. Her religious observances, strictly to the letter, were centred in the kitchen. She was especially careful in all matters connected

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with "kosher" (ritually pure) diet, to observe which in detail she devoted all her energy and self-sacrifice. Mrs. Elfenbein looked up to her husband, confident that through his merit she would partake of all those rewards in the world-to-come for good and pious Jews. Naturally, the children were brought up in the same spirit. They adored their father, to whom they looked for guidance and inspiration. With them there was no thought of choosing for themselves or of acting in any way independently. Everything, not excluding love, they left to their father's wisdom. It would appear surprising that, despite the custom among strictly orthodox Jews of marrying their daughters at an early age, the two Misses Elfenbein were still single. They were both well advanced in the twenties, while one of them would soon be thirty.

They were very nice, of Jewish respectability, although tactless and rather lacking in refinement. But this was regarded as quite natural in their circle. And here there was no question of lack of money, a considerable sum having been set aside as dowry for them. The cause of the delay was rather a matter of Jewish respectability, religious principle, and pedigree. Whenever a shadchan (match-maker) proposed a husband for the elder daughter, there were presented several difficulties of which the principal were three. "Does he keep Sabbath?" was the first question and an affirmative answer had to be proved. The second was of the religious views of the young man, with particular reference to the Synagogue he attended, while the third was of his family, which must be of the same social standing as Mr. Elfenbein's, and of the old orthodox school of opinion.

No objection was raised if the future son-in-law were a Zionist, although the old man would rather leave such grave matters in the hands of the Almighty, for Him to redeem Israel from captivity in His own good time through

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the Messiah, than through England and the Zionist movement.

As a rule, if the candidate for love's hand passed the first question, it was because he was compelled to close his business on the Sabbath through no fault of his own, or because he had no business to keep open.

The second question was the stumbling block. And if perchance this were overcome, the third was unsurmountable. And so it came to pass that matrimony for the daughters of Mr. Elfenbein was delayed until the advent of Mr. Pinchas Fox, who having passed through fire, water, and air, was declared worthy and accepted as future husband of the elder.

She was thrifty, domesticated, and intensely religious ; so much so, that even her father used to call her the Rabbetzin (female Rabbi). So she became engaged after the money question was duly settled to the mutual satisfaction of both parties.

Now our bridegroom, Mr. Pinchas Fox, came from a small town in Galicia, Poland. His parents were extremely poor, but he had received a Jewish education, and with regard to his pedigree and religious views we need not trouble ourselves, since Mr. Elfenbein did this himself to his own satisfaction. He was "froom" and a prominent member of the Sabbath Observance Society. He was of middle age and had worked himself up from the bottom of the ladder, until now he was the owner of a large business. He did not believe in courtship or any of that silly nonsense, so his views about love were similar to that of his bride. He hated politics and did not believe in philosophy, but he believed in making money and in a good meal.

The future better half of our hero was of the same opinion, that it does not befit a Jewish maiden to be in love, excepting with God, her parents, and family. Besides, she argued, how can you love a stranger whom you don't

know? There will be plenty of time to love him when you are married, it will then be your duty to love your husband. Even his plain looks did not seem to affect her equanimity. "I don't marry him for his good looks," she said; "if father finds him all right, then he is good enough for me."

The younger daughter, Dinah, was of a different pattern altogether; although religious, she was inclined to be more practical, more reasonable in her views than her older sister, more active, lively, and impetuous. A distant relative of theirs, a young man, Lewis Goodman, often used to frequent their house. The object of his visits was Dinah, and she was not indifferent to the fact, nor was her mother. Comparing his gentlemanly behaviour towards her with that of Mr. Pinchas, she once remarked to her sister, "Don't you think, Rebecca, that it is rather mean of him not to fetch a box of chocs. or even flowers occasionally?" "Doesn't matter," the other answered, "he is not a dandy and not of a nature to show off. He is a simple man who hasn't been to a school of etiquette, and it shows, I am pleased to say, that he is not used to paying compliments and playing the cavalier; as long as he will make a good husband, I am satisfied." "Well, my sister," said Dinah, "if you are satisfied, I am pleased."

We beg our readers to turn their attention to Mr. Lewis Goodman, because he has some intentions in the same house. The old man had nothing particular against him, but he was not of the old orthodox school after the pattern of Mr. Elfenbein. He possessed an excellent English education, spoke French fluently, was well mannered and of a cheerful, lively disposition, was very particular about his attire and personal appearance. He was clean shaven, which was very repugnant to Mr. Elfenbein, but he was "a good sort of a soul" as the mother said.

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He possessed an excellent voice, of which he was not a little proud. He was not exactly irreligious, but he never came up to the heating point of Mr. Elfenbein's thermometer. He could pass the first degree, having no business of his own, but he would certainly prove a pitiable failure in the second degree. Still, he was suffered to come, and, although ignored by the old man, yet was a pleasant companion to the mother and daughters.

There was a certain rumour amongst the Jewish city men that several houses which owed considerable amounts of money to Mr. Elfenbein were on the brink of becoming bankrupt, and, as is generally the case with rumours, they did not spare Mr. Elfenbein himself, as if he, too, were about to collapse.

Of course it was only a rumour so far as he was concerned, but gradually it became an accepted fact. Our Mr. Pinchas Fox, who had wind of the affair, imagined the worst and was very much perturbed. He resolved at once to save his skin in good time, because his dowry was at stake.

On the following day he paid his usual visit to his bride, and in a roundabout way gave her to understand that times were rather hard just now and that he had expected through the help of the marriage to improve his position. But, as matters were now, prospects seemed to be very remote and therefore the marriage must be postponed indefinitely. Should, in the meantime, a better chance present itself to her, he was willing to withdraw altogether, if by so doing she would be happier. It was a shock to the poor girl and she felt it.

She informed her father about it. "Ah!" said the father, "this time he is mistaken, but I will benefit by his mistake. I will be wiser next time."

Meantime the younger daughter, Dinah, succeeded in gaining the mother's sympathy with regard to her little affairs of the heart. She felt that the mother was not averse and entreated her to acquaint her father with the

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news. She herself would try to obtain the father's approval to accept the young man for her, she still being in ignorance of what had happened with the elder sister that very day.

The mother and daughter entered the father's study, but his gloomy and worried expression frightened them, and they both became disheartened, feeling that it was a most inopportune time. As he perceived them, his features softened, he became calm, and in a most kind manner asked them what was their wish. The mother began, together with the daughter, in a hesitating voice to place their case before him. His features took on their former gloomy appearance. He was evidently suffering great mental pain and said with emotion, "Where is the man? Bring him here." They did not know what to make of the whole affair, nor what awaited them. They were more sorry for the young man than anything else. He was called in and for a moment all was quiet. One glance convinced the young man that everything was at stake. Suddenly the old man approached him, looked him in the eyes as if he wished to penetrate to his very soul and said in a stern voice, "My wife informed me that you wish to demand the hand of my daughter in marriage. Is that so? Now listen, I am a ruined man. Will you take her as she is—penniless—yes or no?" The young man, who with his open, honest and frank face, stood there before Mr. Elfenbein, erect, proud and full of dignity, said, "Sir, however deeply I deplore the misfortune of your financial position, however much I am grieved at the vicissitude of your affairs, it often happens that what we deem a misfortune may turn out a blessing in disguise. I am not very rich, but I am not poor either; I am pleased to say that my position is as safe as it is sound. Gladly will I part with all my savings if that should be any help to you in your present financial difficulties. All my possessions are at your disposal.

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All I ask now is that you give your consent to our union. I want her and her alone. In her I have all the treasures I could wish ; she is more precious to me than anything else in the world, because I love her. I love her dearly for her own sake. All we want now is your blessing to consecrate our love, to sanctify our attachment, and to give your benediction to our happiness."

They all remained silent.

Two heavy tears were rolling down from the old man's eyes on to his white beard ; he was deeply moved, his prejudice was conquered.

" Young man," he said with emotion, " it was always my belief that a good Jew makes a good man, who makes a good husband. I find in you both."

He took his daughter's hands and placed them into those of his future son-in-law, placed both his hands on their heads and blessed them.

During the week following the last described events, the financial affairs of Mr. Elfenbein passed the crisis and he emerged unaffected by it. It was even known to have ended very satisfactorily for him.

On the day of the engagement, as we have already mentioned, there was great rejoicing in the house. There were gathered together an intimate family circle, and there was happiness expressed on everyone present, especially the bride and bridegroom.

They were awaiting Mr. Elfenbein. He was in his study in conversation with Mr. Pinchas Fox, who was as yet unaware of the new engagement.

" Well, Mr. Fox," continued the old man, " of course, under present circumstances the wedding will have to be postponed indefinitely, and if you happen to meet a better chance, I am willing to withdraw, if by so doing I can make you happier." The younger man looked confused. " Well, Mr. Elfenbein, I didn't mean anything. Why, it is all right

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between us I hope ? ” Since Mr. Elfenbein did not answer, he said, as if remembering something, “ Oh, Mr. Elfenbein, by the way, do you remember that last receipt you gave me ? It had no stamp attached to it.” The old man glanced at him with a quick, penetrating look which seemed to go through and through Mr. Pinchas Fox, and said in a quiet, calm tone, as if treating a matter of unimportance, “ Oh, I see, was it on the date you mention ? I think it was two days later. I am not sure, you may be right,” the old man concluded. Mr. Fox brightened up and said, “ Oh, that’s now of no importance.” He took out the receipt and tore it up into several pieces, as if that was of no consequence now, while the old man paid no attention.

“ By the way,” said Mr. Elfenbein rising from his chair, “ my daughter Dinah is getting engaged to-day and my presence is needed downstairs. But I don’t think that yours is required, and therefore I wish you a good-night,” and he bowed him out through the door.

The father sighed deeply with evident relief.

Mr. Elfenbein walked into the room and found his family gathered. They were jolly but not hilarious, and his heart swelled with pride as he watched them. There were his sons with their wives, his married daughters with their husbands, his wife and family, and above all the exquisite happiness which expressed itself in the bride and bridegroom, and indeed he felt happy.

The scribe was waiting there and they began to arrange the affair in black and white, that is, the dowry, the date of marriage, and so on. When they came to state the figure of the nadan (dowry) Mr. Elfenbein paused a moment and said, “ Write down the marriage portion as £3,000 instead of £2,500, since God has helped me, and my daughter has very largely contributed to the business by managing the clerical department so successfully.”

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This was a happy surprise for all. After the business was over, they were all invited into the next room, where the tables were laid invitingly for a repast.

We leave them to enjoy themselves and turn our attentions to our fallen Mr. Pinchas Fox, who endeavours to retaliate.

After having been politely shown to the door, Mr. Pinchas understood that the game was up. He was not so much upset at the time, but he really took it to heart when he heard what subsequently followed. The girl did not so much matter, but the loss of the increased dowry did. He regarded it as a personal loss out of his own pocket, and he brooded revenge, which ultimately he was able to achieve.

This he did by involving young Elfenbein in some shady business transaction and taking advantage of a further indiscretion committed by the young man in trying to extract himself.

Pinchas Fox emerged from it all, satisfying his wounded pocket by mulcting his victims of £500, thus balancing the lost dowry, and soothing his wounded pride by submitting them to much trouble and pain before they were finally rid of him.

CHAPTER TWELVE.

The Wedding of Miss Hannah Bragger.

MRS. BRAGGER is very busy to-night ; she has friends and many visitors in the house. They are all busy discussing the arrangements for to-morrow's affair, which is of great interest to all present, namely, the wedding-day of her daughter Hannah. The company were the most intimate friends of our hostess, and are all well known to our readers.

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They were mostly all talking together, and therefore one could not make much sense of their conversation till after tea, when Mrs. Bragger began to discuss the wedding.

"Of course," she said, "that ain't going to be an ordinary wedding; it'll be a foral and chloral (floral and choral) wedding," she added with importance, "and it ain't no joke. My Hannaleh has chosen her future husband according to her eddication; he is from aboard (abroad). He is a rich business man; mine daughter, bless her, fell in love with his shocking nice handwriting. He writes like a book-keeper, and his letters was most high class. I tell you he's all right. Please God by your children not worsen."

"Don't forget to be in time," she urged her visitors. The reception, with dinner and ball to follow, was taking place in Caxton Hall, a name which poor Mrs. Bragger was struggling hard to remember, the nearest to which she could get being something like "Castor Hall." "You know," said Mrs. Bragger, "that we will have all the silver cutlery and the best of everything that costs something; but we don't mind the money as long as we have it in stale (style). Of course, you can't invite everybody to such a grand affair. We was picking and choosing and yet we got together a crowd, unbeshroie! You know," she informed them further, "we are going to have the Chief Rabbi to official the marriage." "Who?" asked several voices incredulously. "Yes," she said, "mine husband doesn't mind how expensive it is as long as my Hannaleh has it done in the proper way."

"Will Mihma Esther be on the wedding?" inquired Mrs. Showoffski. "No!" said Mrs. Bragger, "she ain't modern enough for such a wedding. I was sure that if she be coming to the hall, she won't approve to the fashionable dresses and them mixed dancings. You know," she said to Miss Freedman, "I ain't old-fashioned; I am advanced in my ideas, and besides, Castor Hall ain't no fit

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place for Mihma Esther's Torah (learning), and she would remind me too much that we are sinners and we will die one day. No, thank you, not on mine daughter's wedding-day."

Mrs. Showoffski laughed over the joke. "By the way, will Miss Brunin be at your wedding?" asked Miss Freedman of Miss Bragger. "No," said the young lady, "she is too much of a pedagogue for my liking. I think I have done her a favour, as she will prefer the smell of her mouldy books than the splendour of our gathering. Why!" she said, "she would feel like a fish out of water. She wouldn't yield to conventionalities; I know her ways. With her it is, 'If you will have me as I am, I come.' Besides that, she wouldn't find any literary people there, and she would not be in her sphere," she concluded. Miss Freedman was silent.

Mrs. Bragger invited her guests to inspect some of the presents. They went upstairs, where a special room was set apart for that purpose. The presents consisted mostly of silver and other very expensive ornaments.

"You have a fine collection of silver," remarked Miss Freedman, who had sent her some fine books, but which were not unpacked yet, since they were not silver.

"Wy mir! bless your heart," said Mrs. Bragger, "we have only rich guests; what is to them £30 or more? That is the sum what we would spend on a present if we goes to a wedding, isn't it, Hannaleh?" But the bride did not condescend to answer.

"Besides," continued Mrs. Bragger, "all them presents are only returns what we gave them; and with all that it won't pay me back half the expenses what the wedding cost me."

"What do you say to Pinchas Fox?" remarked Mrs. Showoffski. "Yes, you mean that one who threw over the Elfenbein girl!" inquired Miss Bragger.

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"As far as I know," said Miss Freedman, "her father threw *him* out rather." "Whatever it was," snapped Miss Bragger, "he didn't marry her." "And rendered her the best service by so doing," remarked Miss Freedman.

"Well, what about him?" queried Mrs. Bragger. "I heard," said Mrs. Showoffski, "that he became engaged to a girl. He thought she has a lot of money and he gave her a lot of jewellery and other presents. Her father, being a clever fox himself, finds for her a richer shidduch, and she marries under his very nose and kept all the jewellery." "Didn't he take up a breach of promise?" asked Miss Bragger. "He did, but her father managed somehow to make Fox lose the percess (process), and had to pay the costs as well."

"I see," said Miss Freedman, smiling, "when Greek meets Greek."

Since Mrs. Bragger did not understand the meaning of Miss Freedman's few words, she asked the ladies to follow her into the next room to inspect "some of the trousseurs" (trousseau), as she called it. "Mind you," she pointed out to them, "them things hasn't been made by nobodies, but firms like Peter Robesons, Waring and Gillers, and the bridal gown by Maison Lizzi (Louise), and the going-away costume and hat by Seffridges; the furnitcha all comes from Mables." Mrs. Bragger lost herself in the unpronounceable names of the various firms which somehow she managed to utter. But those of them that she remembered best were "Madame Lizzi" and "Mable," because she had "shicksas" by that name.

"And you ought to see the bills," said Mrs. Bragger. These Mr. Bragger carefully carried about with him for ever afterwards, to show to his friends with an assumed air of indifference. "Why," he said, "the dresses alone comes to £550, apart from other minor dressmakers in the East End. My wife believes in giving everybody a chance.

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For the rest of the bills better don't ask ; but, thank God, it can't break me. Heaven forbid ! " he concluded with a squeeze of his eyes, turning his Havana cigar between his lips.

The people afterwards speculated what his fortune might be and how he had acquired it in the last few years ; but they came to the wedding just the same, to see, to taste, and chiefly to criticize.

On the morning of the wedding we find Miss Hannah, a tall, good-looking brunette, very proud, capricious, and vain. She is in a very irritable mood just now, very trying for her maid, who is driven out of her wits to know how to execute all her orders. The flowers have not yet arrived, the going-away costume had white cotton attached to it, the wedding dress is not to her satisfaction, it does not look exactly like the one of the Society beauty which she had seen in the *Gentlewoman* and had given as a model.

With all that it is raining, and her youngest brother, a "smart Johnny" who arrived this morning from his "boardering" school, dropped and broke a hand-mirror—which is very unlucky on a wedding-day. "D—n you," she shouted in a fury, "those rotten kids, poking about everywhere !" "I say, sis," he said, soothingly, "don't be ratty, it's rather beastly of you to be in such a rotten temper on your wedding-day" ; and noticing the threatening movement of her beautiful arm, he quickly made himself invisible, muttering to himself that a fellow is to be pitied who is blessed with marrying sisters.

At last the dressmaker, friseur, manicurist, florist, etc., arrived, and she was polished, massaged, and dressed, and was now ready to descend to the drawing-room, where she came in as a smiling, charming, sweet, and innocent-looking bride, which was the general opinion of all the people present in the room. They were mostly neighbours who were not invited to the wedding, but were asked to come.

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and see the bride and wish her "Mazol Tov" over a glass of wine, and also to witness the departure to the Synagogue.

The drawing-room was a spacious apartment and was furnished like a museum, with all sorts of curious and rare inlaid necessary and unnecessary pieces of furniture. It was decorated with tables laden with all sorts of refreshments and liqueurs one could think of, was lit up with many candles in as many silver candlesticks, apart from the chandelier with its electric lights.

Mrs. Bragger in gala dress walked about like the Queen of Sheba, all oriental, all glittering ; but we do not wish to tire the readers with the details of the splendour of her attire. We leave it to their own imagination.

So was her younger daughter, Deborah, a girl about thirteen years of age, in a frock of pink lace, ribbons, and frills. The guests began to arrive ; they were all greeted with exclamations of welcome by our hostess. There followed a tumult and hubbub of voices and the excitement can be easily imagined, with the usual kissing, and wishing "Mazol Tov."

Master Percy, after having been so unceremoniously dispatched by his beloved sister, assumed a gloomy expression, and, attired in his Eton suit with collar and silk hat to match, was standing near one of the tables trying to drown his sorrows by helping himself to as many chocolates as he could get into his mouth, in a race with one of his chums, Benny Klein, who was similarly attired. "I say, Perc," said Benny, "you're a lucky dog to have a sister to marry, while my sisters are all kids as yet." "Do you think so ?" said Master Percy, scornfully, trying to swallow the last chocolate. "I don't wish a fellow to be in my boots." "Why ?" said Benny, "look at your sis Han ; she looks jolly pretty." "And I don't think," was Master Percy's opinion. "Now don't be hard on her, I think her

an awfully nice kid. Won't you miss her ? " " Yes," her loving brother retorted, " her whacks I will miss, sure enough."

The confidential chat was interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Showoffski, who swept in with great fuss and bustle, with her daughter, a tall, pretty girl of thirteen or thereabouts, with dark curls and eyes to match, all in white, with a huge bow of red ribbon in her hair. " Some kid ! " remarked Benny, pushing Percy with his elbow. Percy turned round. " Oh, you mean the girl with the long legs ? A spiteful cat, like her beastly mother," Percy snapped at his friend. Benny looked disappointed. " Now, don't be a nasty rotter. I think her an awfully nice topper " ; and he helped himself to an apple.

" I don't think much of your mucky, beastly taste," said Master Percy Bragger scornfully, placing half a banana in his mouth. " Don't be a silly ass," retorted Benny Klein, hotly, " she is some kid, I tell you. I wish to make her acquaintance, do be a chum." " Give a fellow a chance," said Percy, as if annoyed, but in his heart he liked the girl himself, but he liked to show off before his friend.

" Oi, here is Leibeleh, should live ! " shouted Mrs. Showoffski at the top of her voice, noticing Master Percy. " Unbeshroie ! what a big man he is, he'll soon want a caleh (bride), by my blessed life." She wanted to embrace him, but Master Percy was not in the mood just now to be mollycoddled, and besides, he resented Mrs. Showoffski calling him " Leibeleh."

" You mean my Percyleh ? " asked Mrs. Bragger, with a beaming face. " I told you, mother, not to call me Percyleh. Ridiculous ! I am no more a kid. Percy is my name." He pulled himself up and thrust his hands in his pockets. " Oh, look at him," said Mrs. Bragger, unperturbed by the scornful remark of her youngest offspring. " A good

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year on you, my joy." Percy turned away disgusted. "And your Leyeleh, bless her, what a beauty. Soon we shall be on her wedding, please God," said Mrs. Bragger. "You mean me?" asked Miss Showoffski. "I didn't know it, as my name is Lucy," corrected the young lady, pulling a long face at the mention of her discarded name.

At last the carriages arrived, and they were all driven to the Synagogue. The Synagogue was beautifully decorated with flowers, and roses were strewn on the strip of scarlet carpet for the bride and guests. There were everywhere palms and lily-of-the-valley in abundance, and all in the gathering of guests were gorgeously attired. The gentlemen were all silk-hatted and in frock coats. The marriage service was conducted in the usual way with the help of a full choir, and whatever else money could procure. It was a grand display, everybody agreed, one of the most pompous weddings seen for a long time in the memory even of the new aristocracy; it was a real nine days' wonder. At last Miss Hannah Bragger was married and she left the synagogue as Mrs. Leon Richman, leaning on her husband's arm, a dark, tall, and handsome man. Mrs. Bragger expressed herself, "And what a grand dancing man, with the manners of a perfected gentleman!" She looked proud as she walked erect slowly towards the carriage to proceed to the hall. At the hall all was glittering, never was there a greater display of riches and colours combined. The ladies, young and old, all looked like some enchanted picture from the Arabian Nights. Aladdin with his magic lamp would find himself outdone. In short, East and West joined hands, each of them was trying to outdo the other in splendour and magnificence. The style was great, the dinner was great, and so was the envy and criticism of enemy and friend great. After dinner they went into the ballroom, where a splendid band was playing. They also had an M.C., dressed in a scarlet frock coat with some decorations on his chest, of

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whose stately appearance Mrs. Bragger was not a little proud. By the way, she called him M.D.

There were the usual happenings of such affairs ; some were dancing, some wallflowers looking on, watching, envying, criticizing, as the occasion demanded of them, and gossiping. Gossip ! that queen of mischief who seems to reign paramount amongst the aristocracy of the Ghetto, we meet her everywhere ; no affair seems to be complete without her evil, lurid presence, she has the place of honour, and here this evening she reigns supreme.

Mrs. Bragger was doing the honours in a grandiose manner, trying to command the waiters about as if she were at home with her "shicksas," which the waiters seemed to resent very much, judging by the various muttered expressions which escaped their lips. "Bother her, the old hag, the fat pig," and many more ejaculations. She now and again sat down to listen, to gossip and help in the tune if necessary. We find her sitting at present with Mrs. Showoffski, her bosom friend, so far as that goes.

"I am surprised to see you invited Mrs. Cursman with her blessed lot," said Mrs. Showoffski, in a piqued tone. "How come they here ? Don't you know, she ain't our friend. She would know trouble all her life, the witch ! By my life, if I knowed she was be here, I wouldn't come." Mrs. Bragger looked wise. "You, Mrs. Showoffski, should talk like that, such a clever woman what you are ; can't you see what it is ? I made a rejoicing for my friends, and I invite mine enemies ! Their eyes should burst ! They should see how God has helped me ! They should eat up their inside with envy ! The hag ! A black year on her with her husband, the thief, and their brats ! How they show off ! Look at them, I hate them." Mrs. Showoffski was fully satisfied with her friend's explanation and squeezed her hand in approval.

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"You are really a wise woman, such a good year on me, how clever you are, a politichnick (politician)." "Besides," continued Mrs. Bragger, "when she made her wedding of the old maid, she thought nobody can do it like her; now let her see, bad luck to her, how my Hanneleh, should live, gets married. Now what you say?" she asked. "Am I right?" "Such a blessed year on us, how you was right," approved Mrs. Showoffski.

We leave these sincere friends to their own pleasure and turn our attention to one of the smaller apartments, where, in some, card playing was in full swing; in others, the guests were passing their time in their own fashion.

At one of the many little tables laden with all sorts of pastries were seated Mrs. Phillips, attired in her bridal gown (which was the creation of some Madame, Court Dress-maker, etc., of Hanover Square), Mrs. Cursman, Mrs. Froemberg and her sister, Miss Freedman, and also Mrs. Biberpeltz, who speaks in broken English, mixed with funny Yiddish, and who, judging by her pronounciation, must be French. She comes from Paris. Her husband and herself with a baby came here as refugees at the very beginning of the War and stayed at the Jewish Shelter, Leman Street, E. They were treated, as is well known, exceedingly kindly by the English community, which, together with the British Government, generously supplied them with food, clothes, and, in short, with everything one could think of to make their unhappy lot bearable. Of this generosity not a few took gross advantage; some again, as soon as they saw their way clear, looked for work, in order seriously to begin to settle down in an honest occupation and not live on charity, as a majority of them did.

One of the most serious of them was Mr. Biberpeltz. He had been a rank Socialist, imbued with Bolshevik ideas, but was rather surprised at the liberty which he found in England. He really admired it. "*La liberté c'est à merveille* ;

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la grande chose la liberté anglaise." He used to marvel, but he argued further. "What's the good of liberty when the English working man makes no use of it? Now," he said, "if it were in Russia, they would know how to enjoy it."

Soon afterwards he was able to find employment in a warehouse, where, by working eighteen hours daily, he was able to earn between seven and eight pounds a week. He would accuse the master-tailors, thundering against sweated labour, the capitalists robbing the poor working man, etc. But when he was able first to work for himself, then to become a master-tailor and employ others, he sung a different tune. He would now complain of the workman. "He is lazy, he wants to suck the blood of his poor employer; he won't let you live," he grumbled. His workshop was in the East End, but he himself now lived in Golders Green, where he had bought a fine house.

"What you say to the wedding?" asked Mrs. Cursman. "It ain't for nothing that their name is 'Bragger.' All for show, nothing more. I wonder what she has given to the poor? She won't let them get fat; she'll watch it; them people who like to take, don't give." "I shouldn't be surprised," said Mrs. Phillips, laughing, "she shouldn't make her Deborah's wedding at the British Museum."

There were very lively sounds in the ballroom and Mrs. Froemberg rose from her chair to go and see what it was. All the others followed her.

There a young man was dancing the Kossatzka, the Russian national dance, with all its twistings and whirlings round and stretching out of one leg and then of the other and doing "presiadka," sitting flat on the floor and jumping up again several times in succession, to the well-known Russian tune, playing away amidst the jolly chorus of the elder guests present, who were keeping time by clapping their hands and knocking their heels on the floor. Their faces all

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assumed a new expression, lit up and softened at the sound of that tune which carried them far away from this splendid hall to their various villages in Russia, when in their younger days they had danced this very Kossatzka to the same tune.

The disposition of the guests remained very animated after this dance ; they were chatting, everybody was jolly and lively in his own way ; they went on strike, the M.C. seemed to be dethroned, his services were superfluous, and he felt it, as he sat quite comfortably in a corner in conversation with someone of his acquaintance. The feast seemed to have reached its height. Telegrams were arriving all the evening, which were handed over to the bride. Mrs. Richman was resting after the final valse, which she had danced with her husband, who was a lovely dancer, while the time for their departure drew near. From every part of the hall one could hear laughter.

Mrs. Bragger was in her glory, she asked everybody how they enjoyed themselves, and she was assured that it was grand.

Still another telegram arrived. Mrs. Richman opened it and read it, screamed, and fell prostrate to the ground. She had fainted. The consternation of the guests was impossible to describe, they all ran forward to the spot where she lay, gesticulating with their hands, with frightened faces. First to be on the spot was Mrs. Bragger, who was kneeling near her daughter, screaming in despair. Then she discovered the telegram which her daughter held in a tight grasp. She held up the telegram, but was unable to read what was written. " Help ! " she screamed. " Jews, help ! a telegram has killed my child, read ! " Someone took the telegram and read aloud the following words : " Stop marriage, man already married, Mrs. Richman follows telegram." Mrs. Bragger began to scream and went off into hysterics.

The scene that followed was uproarious, everybody spoke, advised, ran about aimlessly, asking one another for the bridegroom who alone could save the situation. But, alas, he was not there, he had been careful to save himself.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN.

The Divorce Case.

SOLOMON BERKOFF was quite an intelligent young man ; he had received some education in Russia and was what we would call a nice fellow. He had come over to England some time ago to seek his fortune, but, unlike many other new-comers, he had not to struggle very much, because he found here an aunt, who was a widow, well-to-do and living in a fine house.

She was a healthy, robust looking woman, rather attractive and of a very lively disposition. She certainly knew how to dress to advantage. She was always smart in her appearance, even coquettish if necessary. She moved amongst our *nouveaux riches*, and, of course, belonged to our aristocracy.

She had received him in her house, as her brother's son, treated him most kindly, almost affectionately, which in the long run led to intimacy. When their relatives got to know about the unavoidable mischief, they tried to make a virtue out of a necessity, so that the coming offspring should have a legitimate father, to which proposal our young culprit seemed not to be in such a hurry to submit. He did not like the idea of putting his head under the yoke of matrimony so soon. He was even excused on that account by the relatives, since he was her junior by fifteen years and he was

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only of twenty summers, so that when he would reach his manhood, she would be much too old for him.

But as matters were becoming more serious and it would reflect on the family, they decided to have recourse to a pious trick. They called together a family council and also Rabbi Oldman as a legal adviser. The young man, too, was invited on the appointed day, his aunt, and many others. It all looked gay and everything was prepared as for a feast ; the tables were nicely laid with refreshments and plenty of drinks, and they all seemed to be in an hilarious mood.

The men drank heavily and saw to it that Berkoff did likewise, until he was in the irresponsible state in which they wanted him. They then got him, as if jocularly, to say the Hebrew words, " Hahre li ath mikaddashoth li, betabaath mazoth,"* etc., at the same time placing a ring on his aunt's finger, those present acting as the required witnesses. After which the unsuspecting bridegroom was carried upstairs, as he was quite incapable of walking up himself.

The following morning some of the relatives congratulated him and asked where he intended to go for his honeymoon. His dear wife soon appeared, of course with her wedding ring on her finger, full of sweetness, and sat near him partaking of the breakfast which had been prepared for them. The poor fellow looked far from happy ; he regarded it rather as his funeral than his wedding day. He had some vague recollection about putting on a ring, etc., but how it all happened he could not give any account to himself. But he fully realized that he was married, he had no more doubt about that.

" All over ! " he thought to himself. They lived together until young Berkoff made his appearance as a third party of the family. The child was duly circumcised and registered as Berkoff, junior. Meantime, matters turned out not so satisfactorily between Mr. and Mrs. Berkoff.

* With this ring I hereby consecrate thee to myself.

She became jealous, watchful, until his freedom and liberty were restricted to such an extent that it became unbearable, and, as if matters were not bad enough as they were; he fell in love with a young girl who was only twelve months his junior. His life became a perfect hell, and as for his wife, she became repulsive to him.

He knew, and so did his wife, that their marriage was not binding according to the English law, and that sooner or later he would leave her.

This fact she realized ; the more she thought of it, the more she was resigned to it. As the unexpected often happens, Mrs. Berkoff became aware of the fact that the heart of her husband belonged to somebody else and also that she could not help it any more. She consoled herself with the fact that at least her baby had a name.

The family were well aware of everything that was going on and they came to the conclusion that, as the marriage was brought about by necessity, so the dissolution of the same was also imperative, since the purpose had been achieved. They did not see any wrong that the poor young man should follow the inclination of his heart in matters of his own choice. So matters have been arranged for a divorce, which takes place to-night. The members of the family were all assembled together, as also many of their intimate friends well known to our reader, a scribe, Rabbi Oldman, the husband, and a young man, David Hartman. They were waiting for Mrs. Berkoff.

Mrs. Paisterman, who knew that Miss Brunin would be interested in such a case, as she had never witnessed a divorce, informed her of it, and invited her with Miss Lehrer for the evening. Besides, she was sorry for what had happened that evening at her house and she wished to show them that she did not bear them any malice, on the contrary she wished to retain their friendship. And, of course, Mihma Esther was not forgotten.

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"A nice business we are here for," said Mrs. Paisterman, who was sitting with the ladies at the further end of the room. "I would rather go to rejoicings." "Well, she had joy also. Didn't she have a wedding with a brith at the same time?" remarked Mrs. Trooper with a sneer.

Some of the ladies laughed at this.

"I was surprised!" she further said, "to hear at that time about the business, a woman of her age! I thought she would have had more decency and sense."

"Well, ladies," said Mrs. Froomberg, "don't let us condemn her, she suffers enough, poor woman! Besides, I think she loves him, and it is jolly hard on her."

Mrs. Trooper smiled ironically and Mrs. Paisterman said, with a similar smile, "Poor woman!" "I am sorry for her!" echoed Mrs. Trooper. "I am not surprised at her, he is a fine kid." "But after all," said Mrs. Paisterman, looking at Miss Brunin, "it is wrong to laugh at it; one never knows what may happen, we have children of our own." "You are right," remarked another lady.

"By the way," asked Mrs. Froomberg, "have you seen Mrs. Richman? Isn't she a charming little woman?" "No," said Mrs. Paisterman, "I have not had the pleasure yet. I have heard that she is educated." "To whom do you refer?" asked Miss Brunin. "Do you mean Miss Bragger?" "No, of course not," retorted Mrs. Froomberg, "I mean the real Mrs. Richman, the proper wife of Mr. Richman." "Why, is not Miss Bragger married to Mr. Richman?" asked Miss Brunin again, quite perplexed. "What does all this mean?" "It means that Miss Bragger is Mrs. Richman number two," replied Mrs. Trooper. "And what about her?" inquired another lady. "She is after all married. She is married here in England, lawfully." "But her marriage is no marriage," insisted Mrs. Trooper.

"What about the other Mrs. Richman?" asked the lady again. "She came to have a divorce from him." "And where is he?" "Well, if people would know where he is, detectives would not have to look for him," Mrs. Trooper said, laughing. "Is it on account of the bigamy case?" again inquired the lady. "Oh, no!" said Mrs. Trooper, "the police on the Continent were after him a long time ago. They traced his whereabouts to London, and here he slipped through their fingers." "Poor Hannaleh," sighed Mrs. Froomberg.

"May I know what you mean by it?" inquired Miss Brunin, who had been listening to the conversation of the ladies. "Why is she poor Hannaleh? What has happened to her?" "Don't you know?" was the astonished question of all the ladies. "Her husband married her bigamously," said Mrs. Trooper, and related to her the whole affair of the telegram as it is already known to our readers; and she further said, "Rooms were already arranged for their nuptials at the First Avenue Hotel, and it was just an hour before they intended to leave for the hotel when the calamity broke over her head."

"What a terrible misfortune!" sympathized Miss Brunin. "Such a nice girl, a real misfortune." "It is not such a misfortune," said Mrs. Trooper, "as it might have been." "Yes, in one way; however, she is still a girl," remarked Mrs. Froomberg, "and the marriage, of course, is no marriage. What do you think, Rabbi?" she asked him, who with the rest of the men had been listening for some time to the conversation of the women. "According to our law," said the Rabbi, "she is his consecrated wife; but under the present circumstances both his wives must first be divorced, then he is at liberty to retake whichever he likes." "What do you mean, Rabbi, by 'retake'?" asked Mrs. Trooper. "Well," said the Rabbi, "being a free man, he can choose." "I actually know of such a case," said the young man, Mr.

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Hartman, "where such an affair happened, but, of course, under different circumstance." "Do tell us about it," asked some of the ladies, "it must be interesting."

Mr. Hartman began :

"A married couple arrived in the town K——, in Russia, and took rooms in an hotel. They met there many nice visitors, it being a first-rate place. Amongst the visitors there was a very nice girl. The wife noticed several times that her husband's eyes were following the girl whenever he met her, and that he seemed to like her presence ; and also the girl took notice of her husband, who was not a bad-looking man. She made inquiries about the girl, and found out that she had a considerable amount of money left to her.

"She seemed to be thinking deeply, and finally came to some conclusion. One day she remarked to her husband, 'I notice that the young girl is impressed with you, I believe that she has money. Now what would you say if I play your sister and you try and get hold of her money?'

"He looked at her. 'In which way?' he asked wondering. 'What do you mean?' 'Can't you understand,' she said, irritated, 'fool that you are. If I am your sister, you are not my husband, and of course you are free to dispose of yourself,' she said looking at him meaningly. 'The girl, as I have noticed,' she said further, 'seems not to be indifferent towards you. Suppose,' she suggested, 'you make love to her and induce her to marry you? You see, after a short time, you come into possession of her jewels, and money, etc., then we will go abroad.' " "Oh!" ejaculated some of the ladies, "impossible!" "Maybe," said the young man, "but I am only relating the fact as it happened, however wrong it appears.

"Well," he continued, "the husband did not jump immediately at her proposal and he told her that he would

think over the matter. On the following day, he told her that he would fall in with her plan.

"He courted the girl, who evidently liked him, and as time went on it ripened into friendship and he succeeded in the long run in his design, and he got married to the unsuspecting girl. A week after the wedding his real wife asked him, 'Well, dear, don't you think it is time to settle your affairs with the young woman?' He told her that he must not be in a hurry over it. 'It is impossible,' he said, 'to ask her so soon about money matters, she might become suspicious about it.' 'Very well, then,' said his wife, 'it doesn't matter, let us wait another week.' After the week passed by she wished to know when he was going to leave the other one according to their understanding. He said that there was no hurry for a week or two. She didn't like it at all, but she thought she had better submit for a while, although it was against her will. In the meantime her husband began to grow fond of the young girl whom he married. He reflected, and felt downhearted; he compared her innocence and trust in him with his wife, and also his own conduct towards her, and was depressed. He knew that the other one would not wait indefinitely and that it would have to end either way. He was genuinely sorry for everything. To confess to the girl was very hard for him; to leave was impossible.

"He was between two fires. At last he decided to confess to the girl and take the risk; it was worth while, he thought. He realized that he loved her. He told her the truth about their marriage. She was naturally quite upset and very unhappy, because she, too, loved him. 'My dear,' he appealed to her, 'I am wrong; there is no excuse for my action, I know, but it has at the same time led me to real love and I know now the difference between a good woman and a bad one. Trust me! Stand by me!' he begged of her. 'Don't leave me, and I will be faithful and loyal to you all my

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life, and you will never have occasion to regret it. I feel,' he said further, 'that whilst she is my evil genius, you are my good one. Besides, I cannot and will not return to that woman; I love only you. My dear,' he urged, 'another thing, by so doing you will revenge yourself on that woman, who wished to do you harm.' He was silent, waiting for her decision. The poor young woman was in distress; it was a terrible shock to her, she loved him and trusted him, and she suffered deeply. But his appeal was not in vain; she felt that by remaining with him she would really be a good influence in his life. Further, she thought, 'I am already married, and, as he said, I will be able to avenge myself on that wicked woman,' and consented to his appeal.

"He was delighted, and henceforth awaited events. After the expiration of the few weeks, his wife definitely demanded his return. He frankly told her that he had considered the matter and found out that he really loved the girl and he meant to remain faithful to her. The chagrin of the woman can be imagined. She was in a rage, but she had to keep quiet, as it was by her instigation that he acted thus. No supplications, no threats helped, he remained firm. She warned him that she would go to the Beth Din and she did. In the Court, the Rabbies decided that, although it was true that morally she had acted wrongly, legally she was still his wife, and, in order to decide, he must divorce both and then remarry the one he chose," concluded Mr. Hartman.

The Rabbi nodded in approval of the decision. "I guess whom he chose," said Mrs. Trooper, laughing. "I bet you he didn't take the old woman after having a young nice girl." "And serves her right," remarked Mrs. Fromberg. "If he remained with the girl, I think it was not because that she was younger or nicer looking, but because she was a better woman." "And you have guessed,

Madam," said Mr. Hartman. "He did remarry the young girl, and he chose rightly."

"My father told us of a similar affair which happened in his town, B——, in Poland," said another gentleman of the party. If the ladies wish, I can relate it to them." The ladies were very eager to hear about it, as they expected some more fun.

"There lived in one of the small towns not far from B——, a Hebrew teacher called Reb. Shmerl, the Humorous, because he always was fond of telling a joke and was therefore well liked everywhere. He was a poor man, but of a satisfied disposition. So long as he had a piece of bread and some tobacco for his pipe he was satisfied, and thanked God for it. He might have turned out a second Diogenes, if by mistake he had not a Xantippe for a wife. Poor man, he had no rest, day or night; she was continually nagging him; she made his little home a real hell. He stood it patiently for a long time. Finally, she began to burn the dinner, and spoil the soup by adding too much salt to it. "Oh, that is bad!" interrupted Mr. Paisterman. "I like my dinners." They all laughed. "So did he," said the gentleman, "and he decided to run away from her, and he did." "Clever man," said Mr. Paisterman. "He had some pluck," remarked Mr. Trooper, laughingly, looking at his wife, "but my wife has learned how to cook by now," and he winked. "What a cheek," said Mrs. Trooper. "Put too much salt in his dinner to-morrow for a punishment," advised Mr. Paisterman, amidst the merriment of the guests. "Well, what about the teacher?" "He came to my father's town, and he managed to get together a few pupils, of whom my father was one. By the following term he got more acquainted with the place, and, as the people liked him, his school increased, and numbered about twenty pupils.

"Since he could not manage it himself, he decided to get an assistant. The saying is, 'Birds of a feather flock

together.' He got hold of a jolly boy with a mischievous face, and they both suited each other admirably. One day our worthy teacher got wind that his better half had got to know his whereabouts ; in fact, he expected her to arrive on the following day." " Poor fellow ! " exclaimed Mr. Paisterman. " Yes," said the gentleman, " the poor man saw that he was going to lose his paradise." " Ah, is that what you call being away from a wife ? " asked Mrs. Paisterman, smilingly. " Yes, from bad wives," said the gentleman, bowing. He continued further. " The poor man poured out his heart to his assistant, who was a jolly dog. After having heard his master's troubles, he put a proposal to his senior. The teacher listened to it and laughed heartily and said, ' I take your advice, perhaps you are the means of my deliverance.'

" On the following day our assistant was dressed up as a female and was sitting near what was supposed to be her husband as the expected time of his wife's arrival drew near. They had not long to wait, and in comes the beauty. Perceiving the young woman sitting near her husband in a rather intimate position, as if she was his wife, she walked up to her and without further ado began to smack her face, and pulled down her sheital (wig), screaming, cursing and smacking her at the same time. The children got frightened, and my father with many other boys jumped on to the table, looking on in the meantime. That rascal the new wife was not a bit perturbed by the onslaught of the lady and retaliated by boxing her vigorously about her ears, while the teacher all the time was puffing away at his pipe and fully enjoying the spectacle. The consequence was that the teacher had to bring his two wives to the Rabbi and of course had to divorce both of them. When the process with the first one was got through, the other proved to be a male. Thus our hero got rid of his worst half with the help of his assistant."

The company enjoyed the story hugely. Mrs. Berkoff arrived. She was dressed in black, and her face, usually so bright and fresh, looked pale and haggard ; dark shadows round her eyes were a sign of recent tears. At the sight of her the women could not help feeling pity for her, and they greeted her with more warmth.

Rabbi Oldman began to speak, and said, " There are certain occasions in which divorce is absolutely necessary ; besides, it is one of the Mitzwabs. We have it in our traditions that when Abraham was about to enter Egypt he was very much troubled in his mind, as we hear him saying to Sarah, his wife, ' Now I know that thou art a nice-looking woman ; and we come to this land of Egypt, where they will probably kill me and take you into the house of Pharaoh ' ; and he advised her to say that she was his sister."

" Excuse me, Rabbi," Mr. Hartman interrupted, " I should like to ask a question. How is it that Abraham suddenly became aware that his wife, with whom he had been living so many years, was a nice-looking woman ? Didn't he know this before ? " " No," said the Rabbi, " we have it in our tradition that it happened that they passed over a stream and he looked into it and saw for the first time her beauty." " I suppose she lifted up her dress," said Mr. Hartman, " I dare say so." " Well, in the water, as we have it written, he saw that she was beautiful," repeated the Rabbi, slowly. " May I ask what was her age ? " Mr. Hartman inquired anew. " You ought to know, young man," the Rabbi said in a rebuking tone. " Surely, who doesn't know that she was ninety years old." " You don't mean to say, Rabbi, that both Pharaoh and the king of the Philistines fell in love with an old woman of ninety years ? " " Yes," said Rabbi Oldman, " that's just it, herein lies the wonder.

" We have it recorded in our sacred Books that Sarah was at ninety years as beautiful as a girl of thirteen." " It

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is, indeed, wonderful, I admit," said Mr. Hartman, ruefully ; " but how could Abraham tell Sarah to deny that ~~she~~ **he** was his wife ? " The Rabbi looked at him sternly and said, " That simply shows that you are an amhaaretz (illiterate) and don't study our traditions. We have it recorded for us that Abraham, after this conversation took place between him and Sarah, handed over to her a bill of divorce." " I call it a clever trick," said Mr. Hartman. " Please don't be vulgar," Mrs. Paisterman reproved him, " if you don't know the law, keep quiet. I am sure if Miss Brunin should put questions to the Rabbi they would be at least sensible." Miss Brunin bowed to her and thanked her for the compliment.

" Now," proceeded the Rabbi, " a man may divorce his wife for several reasons. In this case in particular it is permissible to dissolve the marriage by divorce (Hillchoth Gittin in Even Heazer 1). A man may not marry a woman with the intention of divorcing her, but if he previously informed her that he is going to marry her for a reason, it is lawful. Now this marriage took place for a reason, and therefore it is a case for divorce. The School of Shammai says a man is not to divorce his wife unless he shall find some uncleanness in her, for they interpret the verse according to its simple meaning, 'if she find not favour in his eyes' on account of finding some uncleanness in her.

" The School of Hillel thinks that if a woman let her broth burn, it is sufficient, for they interpret the words 'a matter of uncleanness' to mean either uncleanness or any other matter in which she has offended him.

" But Rabbi Akiba thinks that a man may divorce his wife if only he finds another handsomer than she is, for he interprets the words 'if she find not favour in his eyes' where he explains favour to refer to the favour of beauty, or if he find a matter of uncleanness.

" But the legal decision abides with the School of Hillel ; that is, if she sin against her husband, he may divorce her."

"Are matters really as bad as that with women?" asked Miss Brunin. "I think I have given the authority for it," said the Rabbi curtly, "and that is sufficient. We read in another volume that the words 'if she find not favour in his eyes' teach that a husband does not divorce except voluntarily, and if the woman be divorced against his will, she is not divorced, but the woman is divorced with or without her will (Yad. Hachazah, Hilchoth Gerushim C. 1, 2). "Then it means to say that a woman cannot divorce her husband?" asked Miss Brunin. "So the law does not protect her?" "You forget," answered the Rabbi, "that a woman belongs to his household, she is his property, and the 'Rambam' is quite right when he places women on the same level as amhaaretzim (illiterates) and children. It simply proves that their moral and intellectual faculties are of a very low order, and the holy Gemara said, 'should a man's wife become deaf and dumb, and he give her a bill of divorce, then she is divorced.' " While the Rabbi prepared to enlarge on the subject, Mr. Berkoff said that he had had enough of it and that they should proceed with the business.

The scribe handed him the letter, written in Hebrew, which he handed to his wife, and from the moment she received it the marriage was dissolved.

Soon afterwards he left the house, probably to meet his future bride, and Mrs. Berkoff, too, took her departure.

"Never in my life have I experienced a greater cruelty and insult against our sex," said Miss Brunin, "than to-night. What a poor estimation do the Rabbies teach our stronger sex to form of the wives of their bosom, of their own mothers, their daughters and sisters. Why," she asked further, "are you Rabbies against us women? Why do you hate us so much?" "There is no question of hatred," answered the Rabbi, "women have to know their position. It isn't their business to meddle in things con-

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cerning the law. The wise men have said that anyone that teaches his daughter the law is considered as if he teaches her transgression. The reason is that the majority of women have not got minds fitted for study, but pervert the words of the law.

"Our Rabbies declared that women are disqualified by the law even from giving testimony." "Is it as bad as all that?" exclaimed Miss Brunin. "There are ten sorts of disqualifications," explained the Rabbi, "and everyone in whom any of them is found is disqualified from giving evidence, and these are women, idiots, children, the wicked, despised, etc." "Are the moral feelings of women considered to be so low," asked Miss Brunin again, "that they may not be trusted?" "The 'Rambam,'" said the Rabbi, "has made it clear. He considered them as inferior beings; they have no sense of serving God." "Don't you think it is monstrous," said Miss Brunin, "that a woman, sacrificing her youth, her beauty, her very life to her husband, and after being worn out in rearing his children or incapacitated through illness or other misfortune, can be driven out of her house on some trifling pretext or for the sake of lust; that is, if he has found a younger and nicer-looking woman? Why should we be excluded from appearing as participators in the worship of God? Or why should we be deprived of praying for our beloved departed ones?" asked Miss Brunin.

"Why do they close Heaven for us, or the entrance to it, unless by the merit of men? As regards the great Maimonides, known as 'Rambam,' it seems that whenever he condescends to notice women he insults them.

"This very man was himself a renegade, a Turkish meshumed (apostate), for he was born and bred in Mohammedan countries centuries ago, where civilization was in a very low state. No wonder he exhibits the same Mohammedan imposture and debases women to the level of brute

creation. He undoubtedly considered women as having no souls, as did the Mohammedans." The Rabbi was full of anger, and could hardly restrain himself. "What is the matter with you to-night?" asked Mrs. Paisterman of Miss Brunin. "I think you know very well what King Solomon himself said, that amongst one thousand men he could find one right, but amongst women he could not. Surely you're not wiser than King Solomon, and wish to turn things upside down?" Here Miss Brunin stood up with eyes flaming, but restraining herself said, "I suppose King Solomon measured the moral standard of the whole of womanhood by the moral standard of his own mother. If he does not respect his mother, I do mine." "Miss Brunin, don't excite yourself," said Mrs. Trooper, mockingly; "you will lose your temper." "No, Mrs. Trooper," said Miss Brunin, calmly, "I am not excited; besides, it is not for myself, I am speaking on your behalf as well, ladies."

"You mean to say," said Mrs. Paisterman, "that you are going to teach me how to live with a husband? I am married seventeen years, thank God, and I have managed it up till now." To which Mrs. Trooper added, "And don't tell me how to handle my hubby, I know how to get round him if I need something. You leave it to me." She chuckled at the words. Miss Brunin looked a little sad.

"I can see, ladies," she said, "that you miss the point; that is not the question at all. Alas, the Rabbies have achieved their object, they may be proud of their handiwork."

"I say, Miss Brunin," interrupted Mr. Paisterman, "don't spoil our women. They are already hard to manage as it is. What do you want to teach them more? We give them everything they want, and plenty of money and a good bit of it." "Oh, I can see," said Mr. Trooper, "that Miss Brunin is making our women worse; that's no good at

all." "You are right," said Miss Brunin, "I may spoil you ladies if I say more. I may make you see the degradation into which the Rabbies have placed you and in which you seem to glory." She was silent, and so were the others for a while.

Mr. Hartman looked upon the young girl with great admiration. He was simply carried away by her charm, she looked so bewitchingly nice. Her boldness of expression, her sincerity, made such a deep impression upon him. But not so Mihma Esther; she was differently impressed, but out of respect for the Rabbi she dared not air her opinion, but she could see how deeply this reckless girl had wounded the Rabbi, and, with him, all the Rabbies. "Ah," she thought, "she has attacked the very religion." This was too much for her, she could not restrain herself any longer and she said. "Well, never in all my blessed life did I hear such blasphemy coming out from the mouth of a Jewish daughter. She actually attacked, in her gross ignorance, the wisest of the wise Kings; nay, she went even farther than this, she insulted his glorious moder, a Queen herself, the wife of the King of the Psalms, and is calumniating the great Tzadik, the 'Rambam,' blessed be his memory—she dared to call him renegade. What do you know" she asked, addressing herself to the girl, "about this great master, Maimonides, the most learned amongst the learned, the greatest philosopher, the greatest surgeon, the world-famous doctor of medicine? Tell me, what do you know about him?" she asked sternly, and, as if waiting for a reply, she stared hard at her. "I say and maintain," said Miss Brunin calmly, "and let the Rabbi contradict me, that very man to whom you refer abjured the Jewish religion; he went over to the Mohammedan faith. Well, if such a one is not a renegade, an apostate, then I don't know what he is." Mihma Esther looked at the Rabbi for an answer, but the Rabbi was quiet and looked pale.

"So," Mihma Esther continued in her comment, "now I can see how dangerous knowledge becomes if handled by women; she becomes her own condemnation. Here this very girl proves it by her rebellious spirit that our wise Rabbies were right—there is always trouble with girls; in whichever way you take it, they are a curse. As is written in our holy Gemara about it, 'A daughter is a delusive treasure to a father.' The anxiety that she gives him deprives him from sleep at night. When she is very young he is afraid she might be seduced, when she grows up she might go astray, when older she might remain an old maid, when married she might not have any children, when aged she might become a witch!" she concluded.

They all burst out laughing, the Rabbi included.

"Now I can understand," said Mr. Hartman, still laughing, "why men have to thank God in our daily prayers for not having created them women."

"Excellent!" said Miss Brunin, "and for what should we be thankful?" "I would rather ask Mihma Esther to tell us," Mr. Hartman suggested. "We women," said Mihma Esther, "thank God in all humility and humbleness in our daily morning prayers that He has made us according to His will." "I think that we have to thank in all humble-and humility," remarked Miss Brunin, "the man who graciously submitted that out of one of his ribs a counterpart or helpmate be created for his amusement." "The Almighty created man first in his image," remarked the Rabbi. "Yes," said Mr. Hartman, "but his helpmate came as an after-thought, and it looks that originally she was not thought of; I think it was a mere accident."

"Well, this is a fine thing if you please," exclaimed Mrs. Trooper, "and if it were not for this accident, we would not be here altogether for all I know." "More than that," said Mr. Hartman, "according to what we have heard your very existence does not count much. You are ignored

altogether ; as a matter of fact you are nothing more and nothing less than a rib, as we have heard, a rib of a man, and nothing else, a mere nothing, your existence is a mere illusion." " Which amounts to this," said Mrs. Paisterman, " that we are practically to all intents and purposes dead ? " They were laughing. " I am afraid that you are, at least spiritually," said Miss Brunin, smiling, at which they laughed still more. " Don't say that, Miss Brunin, we have plenty of spirits," said Mr. Paisterman.

" This reminds me," said Mr. Hartman, gaily, " of that Russian peasant." " Oh, let us hear it, please ! " begged the ladies.

" Well," said Mr. Hartman, " Ivan Shubin, a peasant, came home from the War and reported himself dutifully to the village authorities. ' Who are you,' demanded the stern official. ' I, your honour,' said the peasant, ' I am Ivan Shubin, a native of this village, who have just returned from the War and wish to report myself.' The official looked at him and said with authority, ' Ivan Shubin is dead ! We have it recorded in our books.' ' But your honour,' protested the peasant, ' I am Ivan Shubin ; I am not dead, I am alive.' ' Shut up,' the official reprimanded him with importance, ' the authorities know better.' And basta ! Poor Ivan left the office very perturbed in his mind ; he felt very crestfallen. He began to doubt his existence.

" ' Perhaps I am dead,' he wondered. ' Since he is the official of the holy Czar, he can't be wrong.' As he walked along in his dejected mood he passed a kabak (public house). He went in and asked for a tsharka of vodka (cupful of brandy), his usual dose. He drank it, and as it went down his throat he felt warmer. He rubbed his chest and said, ' By my patron saint ! I feel as if I ain't dead, it's me, Ivan, after all.' He felt a bit livelier at the thought of it. ' I think I am hungry, another sure sign that I am alive and this time the officials are wrong.' "

The whole company burst out laughing and the hostess said, "And that reminds me that we, too, are alive, and it is time we had something to refresh ourselves, and that the officials are wrong."

"Does this refer to our Rabbies?" said Miss Brunin to the amusement of all. The lady of the house bestirred herself and there was soon a repast ready, and they all partook liberally, which added not a little to the already existing merriment and cheerfulness of the company—except for one person who had formed a part of the company, and who was now sitting alone, forsaken and lost in sad thoughts in her room, with her baby pressed to her heart, reflecting over her bitter experience. It was Mrs. Berkoff, the divorced woman.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN.

The Pedian Haben (Redeeming of the Firstborn from the Priest or Cohen).

THE Pedian Haben, which is now being celebrated at Mr. Reddish's house, has been celebrated by Jews throughout the ages in all countries. It is not merely a Jewish custom, but a direct command, given to Moses at the time when Israel was still in Egypt, to commemorate the deliverance from the tenth plague, when all firstborn were slain, both man and beast, whilst those of the children of Israel remained untouched. We invite our readers to the house of Mr. and Mrs. Reddish, to celebrate this very day the Pedian Haben of the firstborn son.

Mr. and Mrs. Reddish have been away from home for a considerable time, and they have made up their minds to celebrate this feast in London amidst their friends,

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more particularly as a thanksgiving for the speedy recovery of their infant son, who since the circumcision was in a precarious state of health. Mr. Reddish is the junior partner of Messrs. Kroolnic & Co., woollen and cloth merchants.

The house was a fine one, "up the other end." The reception was on a grand scale, and the caterers were the best that money could obtain. Mrs. Reddish, attired in a lovely tea gown of the latest and smartest design, was receiving her guests, few of whom, however, arrived at the time specified on the invitation cards, punctuality not being "the thing." The first arrivals were the poor relations. There came various aunts and uncles and many more from the East End, whose reception on the part of our host and hostess was lukewarm. Greetings between them were half in Yiddish and half in English. They were the inevitable mishpocheh (family) whom one was compelled to invite in order not to hurt their feelings.

The others commenced to arrive, Mr. and Mrs. Paisterman, Mr. and Mrs. Trooper, Mr. and Mrs. Goldstone, Mr. and Mrs. Creepinger, Mr. and Mrs. Lieroff, and many others, and, of course, Mihma Esther, with her husband, the Chazon* from the Synagogue; in short, the élite from "up the other end."

Our guests were greeted most cordially by host and hostess, and were conducted to their various places.

It soon assumed the usual animated appearance customary to be seen at weddings, Bris Milahs, Barmitzwahs, etc.

The ladies displayed costly gowns, heaps of jewellery, finery of all descriptions; in fact, one was vying with the other in their attire, forming little chatty groups, secretly watching one another, passing remarks behind backs, and so they passed their time. The men, separated themselves

* Cantor.

from their womenfolk with a few exceptions, were talking, discussing the topics of the day, politics, business, war loans, super-tax, and many other items, generally in a loud voice, mostly speaking altogether, more often in very defective English mixed with Yiddish, with the exception of a few young "Johnnies," who were quite English.

They were offered refreshments, and at last it was decided to proceed with the ceremony.

Now they needed a Cohen, and of course they turned to Mr. Barnett Cohen, a rich property owner, who used to give out barrows on hire before the war. It was a pre-arranged affair before his arrival, but it was made out as if it came spontaneously, as he was known to be a religious Jew, who liked a Mitzwah, especially a cheap one; that is something for nothing.

They handed him a Siddur (Prayer Book), and he looked for the particular prayer about the Peditan Haben, and, somehow, was long in finding it. Mr. Paisterman had pity on him, and, being the most learned in Jewish prayers in the company, offered his help. He also hunted for the special prayer and admitted that he couldn't find it; the Cohen's face beamed with satisfaction that he was not the only one, even Mr. Paisterman failing. The Chazon, who was watching the proceedings with an ironical expression upon his face, and seemed to regard them all as a lot of "amharatzzim" (illiterates), asked for the book, examined it, and found that it was not the particular Prayer Book for their purpose. After having received the one for which he asked, he pointed out the prayer to the Cohen, who read it through very badly, being helped now and again by the Chazon, Mr. Paisterman, and many others, in an half-amused, half-serious way. The Cohen excused himself by saying that he forgot his spectacles at home, and it was hard for him to read without them, but he was readily excused by the company, who were well aware of

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his achievements in Jewish learning, at which some of the ladies, who, by the way, were allowed to witness the present performance at a distance, giggled, and were reproved by Mihma Esther.

Then they asked for the infant to be brought in. It was placed on a silver tray, and many valuables, jewellery and trinkets, were placed at the side of it. It is worthy to notice that they always elect a Cohen whom they know perfectly well, and whom they can trust with all the valuables ; but occasionally they cannot find one in their own circle, and then they procure a poor Jew, generally to be found in the Synagogue, who is a Cohen for a few shillings. The Cohen said the necessary prayers, and started with the object of the ceremony—namely, redeeming the first-born male from the priest, who asks the mother, “What do you wish to retain, the boy or the jewellery.” Now it is perfectly understood to her and everyone present that she will retain both the boy and the jewellery. “A fool she’ll be,” whispered Mrs. Trooper to Mrs. Goldstone. “Of course she will retain the kid, but I am blessed if I would trust him with the jewellery,” meaning our Cohen. “Not me,” she said. Mrs. Goldstone laughed. “Hush, sh, quiet,” the men who were trying to remain serious, called them to order.

“The boy, of course,” said the mother. There was a sigh of relief, although they did not expect it otherwise, and the boy was handed to the nurse, and was carried upstairs.

The company bestirred itself and began chatting and talking again ; but nobody felt more relieved than our worthy Mr. Barnett Cohen, who was wiping the perspiration off his forehead. It really was a bit of hard labour for him ; it is true he did work hard in his younger days, but this function here was above a joke ; he inwardly made a vow that he would try and find Mitzwahs which needed

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less effort from his side, as he confessed later on to his wife, his worthy better half, an old, cross-looking woman, wearing a sheital (wig), and plenty of jewellery on her person.

She called him promptly a fool. "When you wants to be a soldier, you must be able to smell powder," was her opinion. "A Cohen he calls himself!" she continued with a sneer, "only before me you can show off, you shlim-mazol (simpleton)," with many more high-sounding epithets. Mr. Barnett seemed quite used to the opinion his wife had of him, and he said, "You keep quiet with your tongue. Your father knew better to read Hebrew than I? I don't think! Don't show off before me, I know your pedigree; if you have anything at all to boast of in your family, it is I, my beauty."

The company listened with evident amusement to this affectionate loving conversation between husband and wife.

They were invited to enter the dining-room. There was the usual banquet, which consisted of many courses, each in turn praised or criticized by our guests, as the occasion demanded, comparing the present food with some they had had served at various previous parties, and so on. There was plenty of wine, and at the end of the repast money was collected from the guests; some suggested for the Jewish Hospital, others protested; at last it was decided that the money should go to the "Talmud Torah,"* to the delight of Mihma Esther, and which sum was duly sent to the *Jewish Chronicle* in the name of Mr. and Mrs. Reddish, collected on the occasion of the "Pedian Haben." After that the host called for silence, and the Chazon started chanting the after-dinner grace, and the company dispersed to the various apartments.

In the meantime Miss Brunin arrived with her cousin, Miss Rose Lehrer. Around Mihma Esther there was, as usual, a little crowd of ladies, as also a few men who didn't

* Religious school in Hebrew.

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play, and therefore preferred the company of the ladies. They were listening to her remarks concerning the "Pedian Haben," and she continued, "This precept extends also to the firstborn male animals, which, of course, must belong to those lawful for sacrifice, and over which the Shochet* can say a blessing when he slaughters it for Jewish consumption."

Amongst the few men who remained in the company of the ladies was one young man, very intelligent looking, who was called Mr. Levinoff. "May I be permitted to make a remark?" he asked of Mihma Esther. "If I am not mistaken, donkeys are also included amongst the animals." "Leave off with your silly remarks," said Mrs. Paisterman, "and behave yourself." "Well, there are many asses," said Mrs. Trooper, "who differ very little from men, and who often speak like donkeys." "Yes," remarked Mrs. Creepinger, "donkeys do speak sometimes; and yet people are surprised to hear that Baalam's ass spoke."

They were all amused and were looking at Mr. Levinoff, who did not seem a bit offended at the remarks of the ladies, and said, "Well, ladies, I may appear an ass to some of you, but it nevertheless doesn't alter the fact that asses, too, are included, whether the Shochet does make the bracha (blessing) or not."

The ladies were awaiting Mihma Esther's version, to which she said, "Yes, it is strange to say that an ass, in spite of being an ass, which means an unclean beast, does make an exception here." "Why a donkey? Fancy a donkey! How strange!" several voices exclaimed. "Ah," said Mihma Esther, "for this our Rabbies gave a good reason. When our forefathers had been delivered from Egypt, they borrowed from their neighbours gold, silver, and vessels made of the same metal; all this wealth was loaded on the donkeys' backs, of which there were ninety to each Jew;

* Fowl and cattle killer.

therefore they had the merit to be reckoned amongst those animals which could be redeemed."

"Well," said Mr. Levinoff, "it is recorded that six hundred thousand fighting men left Egypt, which, of course, does not include those who were under twenty and above fifty-five years of age; then fifty-four million asses followed the children of Israel into the wilderness."

"Do you not think that it is a bit exaggerated?" asked Miss Lehrer.

"Oh, don't be surprised," said Miss Brunin. "I dare say that the calculation of Mr. Levinoff is right." "I do not dispute the calculation," said Miss Lehrer again, "but the whole affair seems to be fabulous."

Miss Brunin made a sign to her not to proceed with the questions.

"If I am not mistaken," asked Miss Brunin of Mr. Levinoff, "you, too, belong to the priestly family, as your name indicates." "I am not exactly a priest," replied that gentleman, "but a Levi, which is a kind of appendage, head cook and bottle washer to the Cohen, though we must not sacrifice." "Then you are a kind of semi-priest?" asked Miss Brunin. "Yes," he said, "so I am." "Have you any proof that you belong to the tribe of Levi?" she asked further. "Just as much as Mr. Barnett, our Cohen," he replied.

"You mean to say," asked Miss Brunin, "that we have to take everything on credit?" "I suppose so," he said. "What is the qualification of a Cohen?" she kept on asking. "What are his credentials as one? Under what authority does he act? What recommends him as such?" "By jove! Miss Brunin, you must not go too deep into the matter."

Here Mihma Esther sighed and said, "It is sad to think who is now the Cohen. A Cohen in the olden time was the

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one who stood between God and his people—the mediator who atoned for the nation with God, with his sacrificial duties.

After the destruction of the Temple, the Rabbies took their place as teachers. But the priests, shorn of their sacerdotal functions, have still the preference. But nowadays, alas ! all is gone, and in their place Mammon counts as the sole authority, dignity, and power. Money covers everything."

Some of the company didn't seem to palate the comment of Mihma Esther, as they nearly all of them belonged to the *nouveaux riches* ; but knowing of the family of which she was a descendant they were silent. " Mihma Esther," remarked Mr. Levinoff, " our holy Talmud says ' money purifies even the illegitimate.' "

" You are right, so far," admitted Mihma Esther, " that money goes a long way. With money you can do a lot of Mitzwahs (charity), and can buy ' Alom Habo ' (the portion of the world to come)." " So it is," said Mr. Levinoff, " It happens not infrequently that many a Jew in his light-heartedness has sold his portion in ' Alom Habo ' for money to another Jew."

" Woe is unto them ! " exclaimed Mihma Esther, " so do I know several cases myself, but one, nebech (alas), in his last hour, would have given all his fortune for this joke, because the man to whom he sold his portion couldn't be found." They all became thoughtful, it was a serious matter. " But how did he manage to get rich ? " asked Mrs. Trooper, nodding in the direction of Mr. Cohen. " It couldn't be from lending barrows on hire—what do you say, Mrs. Goldstone ? "

" You know," answered Mrs. Goldstone, " to speak is silver, but to keep silence is gold ; it's best not to say too much." " For all that," said Mihma Esther, " I would rather see the child redeemed by a poor, pious, good Jew, who knows the Law, than a rich man who

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is an amhaaretz (illiterate)." "I fully agree with you," said Mr. Levinoff. "In our Sacred Books there is a well-known sentence of a learned authority, who said, 'A learned man, though illegitimate, has the preference over a High Priest who is an amhaaretz.' And, as a matter of fact, if I well remember, an Amhaaretz is even forbidden to eat meat, for it is said in Leviticus, 'This is the Law of the beast and the fowl.' Does our Cohen know the Law? Consequently, he must not eat animal food, and, therefore, I agree with our Rabbies in this respect."

"Mr. Levinoff," asked Miss Brunin, "what is the calling or profession of a modern Cohen?" "Well, Miss Brunin," he said, "I will try to explain it to the best of my ability since you insist. This priesthood has no organization, no centrum, and no leader; it is a disorganized body, responsible to nobody, and, as our worthy priests cannot prove their identity, so there is also no authority to dispute it. Still, he is a harmless animal; he can do neither good nor bad, therefore nobody bothers about him altogether." "Of course," said Mihma Esther, "in the time of our holy Temple it was different; they were organized, they had a leader—the High Priest—who was their spiritual head, as Moses and the Prophets have commanded that the priests should be teachers of the Law, and that from them the people shall learn."

"He was generally a well-known personality, a prince in Israel, rich, influential, and feared." "And," said Mr. Levinoff, "he was also the head of a large household, possessed a large harem and many slaves. Of course," he continued, "this high-priestly dignity was often abused by rival pontiffs, especially at the time of the second Temple. Much blood has been shed when the parties were murdering each other for their elected ones. One high priest was actually murdered by another in the sanctuary. For this

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high lucrative office they depended on the Roman authorities : each aspirant tried to vie with his opponent, it was a question of who bids the higher price. The greater the bribe, the surer was the success.

" Yes, our priests were always a nuisance ; they oppressed and sucked out our people to an extent which is unbelievable. We have a most characteristic picture drawn by our Rabbies themselves concerning the sacrificial priests of their time, known as the ' Rabbinic Satire Concerning Tithes,' which runs as follows :

" In Palestine there once lived a widow with her two daughters, whose only worldly possessions consisted of a little field. When she began to plough it, a Jewish official quoted to her the words of the Lawgiver Moses, ' Thou shalt not plough with ox and ass together.' When she began to sow she was admonished in the words of the same lawgiver not to sow the fields with two kinds of seed. When she began to reap and pile up the stacks she was told that she must leave ' gleanings,' the poor man's sheaf, and the ' corner.' When the harvest time came she was informed that it was her duty to give the priest's share, consisting of the first and second "tithes." She quietly submitted and gave what was demanded of her. Then she sold the field and bought two young ewes, in order that she might use their wool and profit by their offspring. But as soon as the ewes gave birth to their young, a priest came and quoted to her the words of Moses, ' Give me the firstborn, for so the Lord hath ordained.' Again she submitted, and gave him the young. When the time of shearing came, the priest again made his appearance, and said to her that, according to the Law, she was obliged to give him the shoulder, the two cheeks, and the maw. In a moment of despair the widow said, ' Let all animals be consecrated to the Lord ! ' ' In that case,' answered the priest, ' they belong altogether to me, for the Lord hath said, " Everything

consecrated in Israel shall be thine." ' So he took the sheep and went his way, leaving the widow and her two daughters in great distress, and bathed in tears. Now, with regard to the present Cohen, since there is no Temple, no sacrifice, no altar, what is his calling now, and what are his duties ?

" Besides," asked Mr. Levinoff of his interested audience, " how can it be proved that he is of the tribe of Levi, or a descendant of Aaron, a member of the priestly family ? What Jew can prove now to what tribe he belongs ? No more nor less than the Anglo-Israelites who maintain that the English nation are the lost ten tribes of Israel. They try to prove it from the Scripture, but our poor Cohanim, they cannot even do this. We simply have to take their word for it." " What a poor consolation ! " remarked Miss Brunin.

" We see these Cohanim everywhere," resumed Mr. Levinoff again. " We hear them shouting their wares in Petticoat Lane,—' three a penny, women, hot buns ! ' selling nice salt herrings, horse-radish, pickles, ' Mrs. Lady, get a good comb and go home ! ' They may, undoubtedly, be very good, very religious, and hard-working people, but, as our worthy Cohen, they cannot prove that they are direct descendants of the Levitic tribe. Yet they are accepted on their own recommendation, for which they are privileged to be first called up to the Law in Synagogue when it is read in public, in preference to an ordinary mortal, to ransom the baby and bless the people on high festivals, and their nominal function with regard to dead bodies still holds good."

Miss Brunin thanked him heartily for his explanation, as well on behalf of her cousin. Mihma Esther did not see any reason for thanks ; she was indignant at such an exposition ; she called him an Epicoras (heretic) ; she accused him of playing with sacred things most disgracefully. She was quite shocked to hear a Jewish man express himself in such a profane manner concerning the Cohanim.

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In the meantime the gentlemen had left off card-playing, and were approaching the ladies together with Mr. Barnett, our Cohen.

"What is the disputing about, my ladies?" he asked jovially. "Mr. Levinoff denounces your priesthood," said Mrs. Trooper. "Denounces what?" asked our Cohen. "He merely expresses his doubt concerning the validity of the Cohanim in general," explained Miss Lehrer. "How is that?" asked Mr. Barnett in surprise. "What does he know about Cohanim? He is not a Cohen himself. He may be," he continued sarcastically, "an authority on the latest dances, or he may give his opinion on matters concerning the latest stars in the music halls, but as regards to religious matters, I should think he knows just as much as mine shicksa (servant) knows about Cabalah." "Have you ever heard of such a thing?" Mihma Esther asked. "To make fun and ridicule the sacred office of a Cohen, and dispute his authority."

"Do you mean to say that I am not a Cohen?" Mr. Barnett turned to the young man. "He means," said Miss Brunin, "that neither you nor any of your fraternity can prove that he is of the tribe of Levi; he means all the Cohanim, you must not take it personally." "I do take it personal," retorted Mr. Barnett excitedly. "If I am not a Cohen, I should like to know who is a Cohen? If that is the case, then all Cohanim are humbugs, eh?"

"Excuse me, Mr. Cohen," said Miss Lehrer, "he never mentioned anything of the kind." "Excuse me, Miss Lehrer," said Mr. Levinoff in his turn, "if I didn't say it, I mean it." "You mean to say," asked again Mr. Barnett, who was exasperated, and very much so, by the cool reply of the young man, "that I am a humbug of a Cohen, and so all of them?" "Yes, I do maintain it," said Mr. Levinoff quietly. "What a cheek," cried Mrs. Barnett, "a cheek, I call it. What, mine husband is not a Cohen! Who

doesn't know that mine husband is a Cohen?" "Why, I had a chance to marry a rich, beautiful woman from a grand family," said Mr. Barnett, "but the very fact of my being a Cohen I had to drop it, because she was a divorced woman."

Here Mr. Reddish, our host, fell in. "Who disputes that our friend is a Cohen? If he wouldn't be a Cohen," said Mrs. Reddish, "we wouldn't have him to redeem our firstborn." "We know him for years as a Cohen," assured them Mr. Paisterman. "He is the first called up to the Torah, as it is due to a Cohen, and he has blessed us ever so many years on the High Festivals." "I can prove better than anybody whether he is a Cohen or not," said Mr. Goldstone, "because I am a Levi, and before the blessing takes place, it has been my duty for many years to pour water over his hands."

"Well," said Miss Brunin, "what applies to Mr. Barnett according to Mr. Levinoff, applies to you as a Levite, or anyone who is a Levite."

They all burst out laughing. "Well," said Mihma Esther, "if one denies one thing, it is easy to deny other things. You may even deny that Moses was in heaven, or the whole Torah!"

Mr. Cohen turned to his wife, and said in a soothing tone, "Don't get upset, Golda, he can't disprove that I am a Cohen. Rest assured you are the wife of a real Cohen." "A metziah!" (bargain), she retorted angrily, "what a honour to be the wife of such a Cohen; you think that only through you I am a Cohenta (female Cohen)? My first husband was a Cohen, and what a Cohen! One to be proud of. But still, a Cohen is a Cohen, and nobody shouldn't dare to accuse mine husband of being a false Cohen."

"It is very wrong of you, Mr. Levinoff," said Mrs. Paisterman, in a reproachful voice, "to upset the people by your heresy."

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"Fine Jews we have now," said Mr. Barnett, laughing scornfully, "they don't believe any more in Cohanim!" "Which means in our holy Torah," said Mihma Esther with emphasis.

"What have you to say, young man?" asked Mrs. Barnett, in a threatening voice. "What have you against mine husband?" "Madam," answered Mr. Levinoff, "I have nothing against him, nor against the Torah; but if he believes that he is a Cohen because of the Torah, then you are not his lawful wife. And he, as a priest, has degraded his profession and has disqualified himself from being such." Cohen was in a rage. "My bankruptcy of years ago has nothing to do with this affair," he shouted, in a rage, "and it is none of your business. You have insulted me, you scamp."

Mrs. Barnett was knocking with her fist on the table. There was a great commotion amongst the women and men; they were all talking together, gesticulating with their hands. Mr. Barnett assumed a threatening attitude. "You have insulted me and my wife publicly." "I only repeat what is written in the Mosaic Law concerning the priests," said Mr. Levinoff, unperturbed. "What do you know of the priests from the Mosaic Law?" said Mihma Esther. "What do you know about mine wife?" shouted Mr. Barnett. "I have a kesubah (Rabbinic marriage licence)," said Mrs. Barnett.

"Young man, make a clear statement," said Mr. Paisterman, in a warning tone, "there must be some misunderstanding."

Meantime the company were at the pitch of their excitement.

"Give Mr. Levinoff a chance," advised Miss Brunin, "he will explain it." "I am sure he will," added Miss Lehrer. "Shut up, you young geese!" reprimanded Mrs. Lieroff. "Here is a question of a libel." The com-

pany got still more excited. "How scandalous!" remarked Mrs. Creepinger. "The man has been invited here as a guest and has become very rude indeed." "He thinks he is here amongst his stage girls," snapped Mrs. Trooper; "if a man doesn't know how to behave himself, he shouldn't be permitted to come into a respectable family circle."

"Let us hear what he has to say in his defence," suggested Mr. Paisterman. "I have nothing to defend myself for," said Mr. Levinoff, calmly. "It is for our worthy Cohen and his wife." Here Mr. and Mrs. Barnett jumped at him furiously. "He will not leave this place, he must explain everything. Firstly" (counting on his fingers), "how have I degraded my profession as a priest; secondly" (bending his second finger), "how I have disqualified myself as a priest; and, thirdly, how my Golda, should live, is not my lawful wife according to the Law of Moses." "If you are man, and not a cad," was the opinion of the company, "prove your statement."

The two girls were looking up at the young man, anxiously awaiting his reply. "All the questions I can and will answer at once," he said, with the same calmness which had not left him during all the excitement of the others. "Have you a Chumash (five Books of Moses)?"

They brought the books. He looked up Leviticus, chapter xii, verse 7. He gave it to Mr. Paisterman, saying, "Our priest wouldn't understand it. Kindly translate this sentence, which runs as follows:

"They shall not take a wife that is a whore, or profane; neither shall he take a woman put away from her husband, for he is holy unto God."

They all turned to Mihma Esther with anxious looks and expectation. Mrs. Barnett shouted, "My first marriage was no marriage!" "No!" continued Mr. Barnett.

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"My wife's first marriage was no marriage at all. Her first husband turned out to be a bigamist; her marriage, therefore, was not valid. According to the law she was never married."

Mihma Esther replied, "Very true: so far, so good; but remember your wife could only be re-married if she is first divorced from her previous husband, who cheated her into an illegal marriage. Your wife is a divorced woman; therefore your marriage with her is illegal."

Mrs. Barnett burst out into tears, and, screaming, fell into hysterics. "Woe is unto me," lamented Mrs. Reddish. "If this is so, then the Cohen is no Cohen, and our Pedian Haben is no Pedian Haben. Our child is not redeemed, and what about my expenses?"

There was a great uproar amongst the company. Mr. Levinoff found it advisable to withdraw, and so did the two young ladies. We would advise our readers to do likewise.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN.

The House of Mourning.

MR. MILLSTEIN is in mourning. He had received a telegram from Poland that his father had died. He is now at home for a week to sit "Shiva." There are many of his friends who call and condole with him, and to-day we find many of them paying their visits to him.

When Miss Brunin came into the room, Mrs. Millstein was just relating something to her lady friends which seemed to be of great interest. Miss Brunin came nearer to the circle of the ladies and became interested in the conversation.

"You mean Leah Weiner?" inquired Mrs. Goldstone. "I mean her," said Mrs. Millstein. "You have never seen

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a more devoted daughter as she was, all parents should be blessed with such children. With an ailing mother, an autocrat for a father, stern and grumbling, the life of the girl was very sad indeed. They only had the two children, a son and a daughter, and you know by our Jews, bless them, a Ben Yochid (only son) ! He was pampered and spoiled, while all the money was spent on his education. He went to school till he was eighteen, while the poor girl was taken away from school by a doctor's certificate, saying that she was needed at home to look after her invalid mother.

" She nursed her mother patiently, stood all her whims, never knew what it meant to have an hour of freedom. Whilst all the girls of her age were enjoying themselves, she was watching her invalid mother. It was, I tell you, the self-sacrificing life of a noble and loving child.

" When the mother sometimes felt easier, she thought of the girl's cheerless life and asked her to go out. She, poor girl, couldn't tell her mother that life had lost all attraction for her. She gave up two good matches for her parents' sake ; her only thought was, ' who will look after my ailing mother and old father.'

" Once it was even whispered that she was very much in love with a nice young man who was going to America." " I know who it was," remarked Mrs. Goldstone, " it was Alfred Levinoff." " I believe it was he," continued Mrs. Millstein. " He begged of her to go with him, or if not, he would wait for her, as he was very fond of her ; but her mother came first in her thoughts and she sacrificed the only love that she ever had. Now the boy, nothing was good enough for him. After finishing his business training, the father took him into his own business. He was their pride, their only one. But you know these pampered boys ; he was always in trouble, always short of money ; he gambled, lost money, and the sister, she was always protecting him before her father ; not that she approved of his

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mode of living, but she wanted to spare the old father, and especially the mother. She used to sit up late at night and let him in, often drunk. Sometimes he didn't come home at all, and she sat and watched, watched till the small hours of the morning. She got—nebech!—old and grey with anxiety, but always entered the mother's room with a sweet, encouraging smile.

"I tell you," said Mrs. Millstein, "she was a saint. And at last the fearful crisis with the boy occurred. He got into bad company, gambling, women, and all the nice consequences, got into more debts and something worse as it was rumoured at that time, and finally he collected a large sum of money for his father and decamped with it; and the poor girl was left in real agony.

"She had to soothe the stern old father, whose only joy in life was Moishela, and keep it away from the mother. Talk about hell! She had it. The eternal excuses she had to find to explain her brother's absence, it nearly drove her mad. It needed all her self-possession and courage to hear her mother's cry for her Moishela, her Kaddish, her pride. He away—God knows what he is doing, certainly nothing good, as far as she heard—and the poor girl concealing the truth all the time; and when her mother used to say that she thanks God that He at least had presented her with a Kaddish who will pray for her soul, in order that she should be soon relieved from torture and hell, this went too far; it was more than the poor girl could bear, she had to go out and cry. That was one of the most terrible experiences for poor Leah.

"There she was sitting at her mother's bedside, listening to her moans, groans, and calling her son's name in an endearing voice. 'Moishela, my Kaddish, my Moishela,' she begged of him to come to her.

"In her delirium she accused her daughter that she didn't let him into the room to see her. The daughter, bent

down with sorrow and blinded with tears, tried to soothe her, but in vain ; and so for hours she struggled with the Angel of Death who was hovering over her. When she was quieter, she was whispering with her blue, bloodless lips. The daughter bent down, she thought her mother was calling her ; but no, it was not her name she heard. It was Moishela, her only saviour now.

"She had to go to the cold, dark grave without the consolation of seeing her Kaddish once again. Yet the poor soul Leah wasn't envious of her brother. She wished with all her heart and soul that he were here to alleviate the pain and terrible agony of her dying mother, who was all and everything to her. She begged of God and prayed to him since miracles were possible couldn't He do something to bring it about now ? But no, nothing happened.

"The poor girl sent to the Synagogue to have ten poor Jews chant psalms and pray for her mother that God should prolong her life. She gave money to buy the candles to burn in the Synagogue, she distributed her mother's clothes amongst the poor, they ran to the cemetery to pray to the dead, perhaps that would help to keep her mother alive ; but it didn't help. When God doesn't want things should help, nothing will help.

"The mother expressed a wish to say confession of sin. They went for a Rebbitzin, who confessed with her. At last all hopes were given up, and yet the dying woman still called for her only son, her Kaddish. Why, the very salvation of her soul depended upon it.

"Alas, he was not there, and gradually she stiffened ; her finger tips and nails got blue, her gaze glassy, and still she moved her lips. The daughter bent her head, she rather felt than heard her dying mother ceaselessly repeating the words, 'Shma Israel (Hear, O Israel), my Moishela, my Kaddish !'

"All of a sudden, with a superhuman effort, she pointed with a horror-stricken gaze in front of her. 'There they are,

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the Angels of Torture and Death ! Darkness ! Gehennam ! I am lost, save me, Moishela, my Kaddish ! ' She fell back and died. Well, you ought to have seen the grief of that poor girl," continued Mrs. Millstein. " It wasn't wild shrieking, screaming and carrying on, as is the custom with our Jews, bless them, but there she remained, quiet, lifeless, hopeless, all her joy and interest in life gone with her mother—a dried-up, shrivelled old maid, who had sacrificed all and everything for her mother, with no expectation for the future, old before her time, left with an old, morose, broken-hearted father.

" And now came a terrible question. They didn't know the proper address of the son—and it wasn't a very nice address either, down there in Buenos Ayres," added Mrs. Millstein—" to inform him about his mother's death. You know, we Jews needn't inform an absent daughter," remarked again Mrs. Millstein, " but a son ! he must say Kaddish " (prayer for dead parents) !

Here Miss Brunin interrupted with a voice choked by emotion. " The son ! especially that son ! but why he ? Could they not let the daughter say Kaddish ? Surely she deserved it, they ought not to deprive her of that last service."

There was a stir amongst the listeners. Most of them had tears in their eyes from the sad narrative. It had never occurred to them—such a question.

" A daughter ! a daughter ! " several of them exclaimed. " You don't mean it." Mrs. Oldman, the Rabbi's wife, an elderly woman with a wrinkled, yellow-complexioned face, wearing a sheital, looked almost offended. " What you mean ? " she said, shaking her head. " A daughter mustn't say Kaddish, how comes ? A son must do it," in an instructing tone. " But," said Miss Brunin, " in a case like the present one it is inconceivable ; they ought to let her say Kaddish, especially if they did not know the address

of the son." "God is with you," repeated the Rebbitzin, with disapproval in her voice. "I did never hear of such a thing." "I know," said Miss Brunin, "it is not being generally done, but here there should have been an exception." "But we mustn't, the law doesn't allow it," reproved the Rebbitzin. "Let us ask the Rabbi," suggested Miss Brunin. "It cannot be as bad as all that with a poor female."

Many of the ladies were getting interested and asked Miss Brunin to do it, as they knew that she was always more advanced than themselves in asking questions concerning the law.

The Rabbi was in another room with Mr. Millstein when asked about it, and could give only the advice to hire a poor Jewish man from the Synagogue as a substitute, who would manage it for her.

The Rebbetzin looked triumphant and the rest of the ladies satisfied, except Miss Brunin, who remained thoughtful and silent, pondering. "Alas!" she said to herself, "our holy religion seems to be merciless where we women are concerned."

Our readers will remember the last hours of the late Mrs. Weiner, how, when she died in despair, and horror-stricken, her last words were the usual words in Hebrew, "Hear, O Israel; the Lord is our God, the Lord is One." It is the confession of faith, the belief in the Unity, according to the Thirteen Articles laid down by the great Maimonides and accepted by the Synagogue. It is to be repeated daily in the morning prayer. The few Hebrew words, as expressed by our poor Mrs. Weiner and repeated on her death-bed, are not as a rule understood, particularly amongst the women. To them it is not only a confession of faith with regard to the Unity; to them it conveys something quite different. They cling to the two words, as one who is drowning and tries to grasp even a straw. To them "Shma

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Israel " means " Save me !—Have pity on my soul !—Pardon me, I am lost ! " She called on her poor boy, the only one who could save her, but there was no response. No wonder her death was full of agony ; she did not know where she was going, she saw nothing before her but a bottomless pit ; she was not sure of salvation, but that she was going to hell ; of this she was convinced.

For it requires the surviving son to repeat the prayer known as the Kaddish for the departed parents, and that prayer must be repeated for many months, in order that they procure their release, as is stated in " Yoreh Deah " 376. The custom, therefore, is for twelve months to repeat the prayer called Kaddish and also read the lesson in the Prophets, and to pray on the evening of the ending of Sabbath, for that is the hour when the souls return to hell, and when the son must pray and sanctify in public in order to redeem his father and mother from hell.

We can understand now the despairing words of the dying mother, calling for her son to undertake the work of her redemption.

After the funeral follows the sitting of " Shiva," which lasts seven days.

All the members of the family are sitting in a semi-circle on low stools in their socks ; the food is generally prepared by a relative or friend, and during these days there are continually arriving and departing relatives, friends, acquaintances and visitors, more or less according to the circle in which they are in the habit of moving, sympathizing, condoling, inquiring, or even paying formal visits.

It is generally lively to a certain extent on account of the visitors, excepting at the time of prayer, which is performed twice daily, morning and evening, to which either the men of the neighbourhood attend to form " Minian " (Quorum), or ten poor Jews, who hire their services, and who are generally to be found in the neigh-

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bouring Synagogue (which, by the way, seems to be their sole occupation).

At the time of prayer the women are separated from the men, all sitting together in a corner. In the morning the service looks sad enough, but in the evening it is real mourning. Semi-darkness prevails in the room, the men praying all together, swaying to and fro, which reproduces weird shadows in the glimmer of the candles burning in a corner of the room. Then all of a sudden, with loud voices of "Yisgadal," there commences the Kaddish.

The women generally cry and the atmosphere is heavily laden with dark gloom, silence interrupted now and again by a stifled sob. There is nothing darker, nothing gloomier, nothing more hopeless-looking than the week of Shiva in an orthodox Jewish house. The mourners have a forlorn appearance, the men unshaved and unshorn, which may not make such a bad impression with the elder persons, but which looks quite pitiful with the younger generation.

The women look neglected, as they may not care for themselves—they may not wash properly nor cut their nails for forty days. It brightens up somewhat on Friday nights and on Saturdays, on which days they do not sit, though they do not leave the house.

Now we should like to invite our readers to a similar case, but unlike that of Mrs. Weiner. It is more sad, as the dying woman here has never had a son and her dying lips could not call him by his name. She had nobody to rely upon except her daughter, who could do nothing for her. It was Miss Rose Lehrer's mother, the aunt of Miss Brunin.

When her mother was carried away to her last resting place, it seemed to Miss Lehrer that her own life was carried away to be buried. There she sat, motionless, a picture of apathetic listlessness, with a void, empty look on her face. The room was semi-dark, still smelling of carbolic dis-

infectant ; the photograph of her mother was covered with black crepe, and in a corner on a table, there was glimmering a small night-light, the "Yohrtzeit," shedding a faint light and making the room appear ghostly, so that the imagination played no small part, especially in the evening.

A few days after the funeral friends began to arrive. Of course they were not allowed to shake hands, not to wish "good day," nor ask how the mourners were. They might only wish a long life when leaving.

We find there a lady friend of the house, Mrs. Drevosadski, who seemed to feel quite at home. She was a good-hearted woman, especially on such occasions. She was always willing to help ; she brought everything to the house, prepared the meals, and in general acted godmother to poor Rose Lehrer, although she had her own house to provide for first. She entertained the visitors, satisfied their curiosity by telling for the fiftieth time how it happened, how she died, how she suffered agony for two days, what the big specialist said, and how she died broken-hearted that she left no Kaddish, and how devotedly Rose nursed her, and so on ; at which Rose listened for a moment and then fell back into a hopeless, gloomy, brooding state.

She did not feel the void it left in her life as long as the visitors were around her, but when she was alone it reminded her of her loss. Her occupation was gone, her mother would not need her services any more—never ! She was not capable of thinking. On the fourth day of the Shiva, Mihma Esther arrived to condole with poor Rose. She sat down with Mrs. Laichter, Mrs. Paisterman, and many other visitors.

Mrs. Drevosadski began anew the whole business, how it happened and how it ended. "Poor orphan," said Mrs. Laichter. "Well, by God, you mustn't ask no questions; when your ticket is up you must leave the train.

"I suppose she had no more years to live. Poor Rose !" she said again, shaking her head. At which the poor girl

began to sob silently. Mihma Esther, Mrs. Paisterman, and all the other ladies tried to quieten her, and Mrs. Drevosadski forced her to have a cup of tea, which the poor girl assured her that she was unable to take, but all the ladies insisted, and to please them she drank it.

Mrs. Laichter, wishing to make good her former consolation, began anew! "After all, that here ain't so bad when you think of it. What would you say as what happened by Mrs. Jacobs last year; it shouldn't happen in no Yiddisha house. Three of her kids died all in the same week; noo, what you think of that?" "Yes," said Mrs. Paisterman, sighing, "you can run away from everything, but you can't run away from death. Heaven help us," and she shuddered at the thought of it.

"And what shall I say," remarked Mrs. Shipezki, the Scripture reader's wife, "when mine poor daughter died in the first confinement with the baby and all? Such a young tree cut off, only twenty years old." "What was the matter with your daughter?" inquired Mihma Esther. "She must have had the evil eye on her," suggested Mrs. Laichter. "Of course," said Mrs. Shipezki, convinced. "The doctor said that if she had a good nurse, p'raps she would be saved, but a bad luck to them doctors, they know much! He took the baby with extruments, it be dead-born, and after that, mine poor daughter was be getting very hot, the doctor measured her heat with a gasometer." "You mean thermometer," remarked Miss Brunin, with the faintest smile on her face. "Yes, them things," continued Mrs. Shipezki, "and the doctor said, 'At once to the hospital'; but it was too late. But I am sure it was the evil eye, as sure as I am a Yiddisha woman, and I know who give it to her." "Who?" asked the ladies, interested. "Mrs. Block—she should get a fit to-day!—who be married ten years and has got no kids, and mine poor daughter was married one year and she always envied her."

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"Noo," said Mihma Esther, "what's the good to quarrel with God Almighty? I dare say it had to be like that," with which most of the ladies agreed, except the mother, who was drying her eyes. "Last week I was by the Shmipinski's, when the mother died and left one girl and six Kaddeishim," said Mihma Esther, in a rapturous voice. "What a merit!" exclaimed Mrs. Laichter and Mrs. Shipezki, in almost envious voices. "Yes," she further remarked, "you ought to see when they all stood up and said in one voice, 'Yisgadal.*' It must have gone up to the seventh heaven and I am sure the mother must have heard it; that's where sons come in."

Here Miss Brunin could not restrain herself longer. She noticed the painful impression which the conversation made on her cousin, especially the last part, but she did not wish to offend the visitors, who, although ignorant, meant well—they all wished to cheer up the girl in their own clumsy way, but they were tactless.

"Surely," she said, "it is true that a son may be helpful after death, but it is the daughter who is useful for the living, for it is she who nurses the parents, who lives with them. It is true that the son, with his Kaddish delivers the parents from hell, but the daughter by her care and attention prolongs their lives and nobody could have done it better than my cousin here, I am sure." Rose looked up at Miss Brunin and burst out crying, but it was a cry of relief, and for the first time she spoke. "I assure you, ladies, I wish I knew what more I could have done to prolong the life of my good mother or to assuage her sufferings before she died. If it were even at the expense of my own life, I should have gladly done so, but there was nothing, nothing I could do."

"We all know it," said several voices. "You was a good daughter, such a year be on me," added Mihma Esther, in a soft voice. "Yes," said the girl in a dejected tone which

* The special prayer for the departed one.

sounded like a cry of despair," a good daughter, what is the good of it, when I am useless in the hour of her greatest need? I am not to say Kaddish, the only means of redeeming my poor mother from hell," and she lapsed into silence.

Miss Brunin wished to say something, but remained quiet. "Well," said Mihma Esther, "this is a thing what can't be altered. If our great and wise Rabbies said so, they know what they were saying; and that's for why every parents wish for a son." After some more advice and utterings of consolations, which sounded very poorly in the ears of the lonely girl, they all took leave with many sighs and wishing her "a long life," and that she should know no more sorrows. They all left, with the exception of Miss Brunin, who came to stay with her cousin for the rest of the Shiva. During the rest of the time Miss Brunin proved to be a real consolation to her cousin. She was helpful in every way, sympathetic and practical. Moreover, they were very little disturbed by more visitors, only occasionally. She tried to brighten up and cheer her cousin in her very delicate way. She spoke to her about her mother, about their happy life together, reminded her of her loving little ways, so that gradually Rose got used to speak about her mother with less despair and awe, and she felt altogether better with her cousin, whose presence was very soothing to her. She began taking more interest in all that was going on.

They had many little chats concerning things in which Miss Brunin managed to interest her, so that by the end of the Shiva her spirit had brightened perceptibly.

She felt that she could speak to Miss Brunin more intimately and openly about questions of religion, and other questions which she could not discuss with anybody else.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN.

Miss Brunin and Miss Lehrer Discuss the Problem of Life Beyond the Grave.

AS the end of the seven days' mourning was approaching, one evening Miss Lehrer and Miss Brunin were sitting together as usual, speaking about Rose's mother, when the former said to Miss Brunin, "I wish to ask you something, Anna. I know you are well read and open-minded. I hope you will explain it to me."

"Willingly," said Miss Brunin, "if possible." "How is it," said Rose, musingly, "that I, who loved my mother so dearly, whom I watched day and night, did not allow anybody to touch her? How is it, I wish to know, why did I feel so much afraid of her when she was dead? I know that she was my mother, and yet not the same; I thought of her as a corpse."

"My skin used to turn cold when I saw her lying stretched out on the floor, with her feet towards the door, covered up with a black cloth, and the many candles burning around her coffin. I did not dare to look at her, it was fear. I could not bear to be left alone with her. When I went out, I used to look round furtively to see if she was lying still in her place."

"Why should I have felt thus? Perhaps it was wrong of me, but I confess I did feel afraid. Besides that, when I was watching at the bedside of my poor mother, and saw how she struggled with death, I noticed fear in her eyes. I felt it afterwards in her dying body. You know, Anna, better than others, that my mother was a pure soul, a

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God-fearing, pious, Jewish woman, who never did any wrong as far as I know.

“How is it, then, that she trembled to die, and why do we Jews cling so much to life? Why is it that all our prayers and all wishes are for a long life? On Rosa Hashana (New Year) and Yom Kippur we tremble, we are in continual suspense as to what the decree and seal placed on it may be. Is death really so terrible? Why do we fear it so much? Surely we have to die one day, and yet we Jews have a perfect horror of death. I think we cannot help it, it is inborn in us, it is in our blood. What could be the cause of it?”

“In my opinion,” said Miss Brunin, “it is this, because Moses the Lawgiver, the greatest of the Prophets, who spoke with God face to face, the only authority, passed this question over in silence. Nay, more than that, he never held forth any reward for obeying the Law except earthly prosperity, and for disobedience of the same, terrible punishment in this world. Our learned Rabbies, who have made such wonderful discoveries in the Torah of Moses, unearthed mighty secrets, known only to the élite. They often have detected between the lines, sometimes between the words or letters, or even between the vowels and strokes, new doctrines, new theories, which they call mountains hanging on a hair.

“Such as the Law of Hilchas Shechita, a mighty volume of laws concerning slaughtering, *i.e.*, Kosher and Trifah meat, of which the Mosaic Law knows nothing. But our Rabbies have been able to squeeze out this doctrine from one single word. Verily, ‘a mighty mountain hanging on the point of a hair,’ and in this manner have they discovered the doctrine of resurrection and the life everlasting, a thing which Moses did not mention, as he might have done. But it was left to our wise Rabbies to detect it. By the comparison of two Biblical verses the happy result was

arrived at. They are both in Deuteronomy v. 16, and xxii. 7. The first we read, 'Honour thy father and thy mother as the Lord God has commanded thee ; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well unto thee.' In Chapter xxii. 7, 'Thou shalt in any wise let the dam go and take the young to thee ; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days.'

"One of our Rabbies saw in it a mighty problem, and he asked in the Talmud, 'Suppose a father tells his son to go up on to the roof of the house to fetch down a pair of pigeons and to send their mother away. Here the boy has fulfilled a double commandment, for which, in both cases, as we have seen in the above two verses, good days and prolongation of life have been promised to him. Now suppose it happens that in climbing down he slipped, fell, and was killed, instead of being rewarded as promised him.'

"From here our Rabbies have learned that the reward must refer not to this world, but to the future, the 'life' here must mean everlasting life, and the 'good days' eternal bliss." "What a poor foundation!" exclaimed Miss Lehrer. "What idiotic proofs! And on such sandy ground is built our hope for eternity! Have they any other proofs from the Scripture?" "There are one or two more proofs," Miss Brunin replied, "but they are much too absurd to mention, they refer more to hell and eternal condemnation. The doctrine of hell and heaven, which the Rabbies gradually developed into mighty facts, does not give satisfaction to the poor thirsting soul on its death-bed in the hour of trial, even to the Rabbies themselves. They do not find consolation in their own handiwork, as we find recorded in the Talmud.

"There was the great Hillel, whom the Talmud considered as one of the greatest of men. And he was a remarkable man. He lived just before the Christian Era, and was the head of a great theological college. He was a very

learned and a very wise man, and many of his sayings agree with those of Jesus, particularly those in the Sermon on the Mount. Indeed, many Rabbies of modern times, such as Geiger and other German savants, as also the famous Renan, have tried to prove that all the great sayings of Christ had been said by Hillel long before. This Hillel, according to the Talmud, had eighty disciples, of whom thirty were as worthy as Moses our Master to have the Shechina (Divine Glory) resting on them, and thirty others were as worthy as Joshua ben Nun, that for them the sun should stand still. There were twenty more, of which one was Reb. Yohanan ben Zakai. His knowledge, according to the Talmud, was extraordinary; amongst others, he understood the language of the angels and demons.

“It is further said of him that he did not leave unstudied the Bible, or Mishna, Gemara, the Constitutions, the Agadoth, the beauties of the Law, and the Scribes. He was a great mathematician and astronomer. Angels used to descend to listen to him, and when birds happened to fly past his place at that time, they were burned by his fiery words. He was, indeed, a Light in Israel, and as such he was known.

“When he was on his death-bed his disciples visited him, and they found him crying. They were greatly perturbed and they asked him, ‘Rabbi, why! Dost thou cry?’ ‘Yes,’ he answered, ‘I will soon have to appear before that great King—unlike the earthly ones, who can only destroy the body—but I am about to appear before the King of Kings, who can destroy the body and soul; why should I not cry? I can see two ways before me, and I do not know whereto they are leading!’ In other words,” said Miss Brunin, “he had fear!! . . . He was not sure of his salvation; he saw two ways and did not know where they were leading; he trembled to have to appear before the Judge, and did not know what awaited him. He, this

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Light of Israel, with all his heavenly knowledge, his intercourse with angels ; he, the most learned and famous Rabbi, trembled before death, because he knew nothing of what is beyond the grave.

" All his Mitzwabs, Kaddish, etc., seemed to be at that hour of no avail to him. . . So he knew nothing to rely upon, just as any other mortal." " And these are our leaders and authorities ! " exclaimed Rose. " Alas, it is so," said Miss Brunin. " It amounts to this then," said Rose warmly, " that one blind man leads the other one. Do I understand rightly ? " " Exactly so," affirmed Miss Brunin. " If this is the case, what is the merit of the Kaddish, this conjuring trick of redemption ? " asked Rose. " I have repeated it so many times since my mother's death, over and over again, untiringly. I thought perhaps I might do some good with it, if even in the smallest degree I could do some good to the departed soul of my mother." " You will probably be more surprised to hear," said Miss Brunin, " that the Kaddish, as far as a prayer goes, has no reference to the departed ones." " What then is this Kaddish ? " asked Rose in surprise. " In what consists its great redemptive power ? What does it contain ? What are its mysteries ? Are there any hidden cabalistic words in it ? " she kept on asking. " Nothing of the kind," said Miss Brunin. " Its power over us consists in our ignorance—and of this, our ignorance, they take advantage. This is my opinion, of course ; I may be wrong altogether," she concluded.

" Besides, here I have brought you the literal translation of the Kaddish, and also the grand Kaddish called ' Rabbanim Kaddish ' ; and see for yourself the Kaddish of the orphan, as said at public prayers : ' May His great Name be exalted and sanctified throughout the world, which He hath created according to His will. May He establish His Kingdom in our lifetime, and in the lifetime of the whole House of Israel—soon, and in a short time, and say ye

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Amen, Amen. May His great Name be blessed, and glorified for ever and for ever. May His hallowed Name be praised, glorified, exalted, magnified, honoured, and most excellently adored ; blessed is He, far exceeding all blessings, hymns, praises, and beatitudes that are repeated throughout the world, and say ye Amen, Amen. May our prayers be accepted with mercy and kindness. May the prayers and supplications of the whole House of Israel be accepted in the presence of their heavenly Father, and say ye Amen. Blessed be the name of the Lord, from henceforth, and for evermore. May Heaven grant the fullness of peace, with life unto us and all Israel, and say ye Amen. My help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. May He, who maketh peace in His high heavens, bestow peace on us and on all Israel, and say ye Amen.'

"The following portion is called the 'Rabbanim Kaddish' and is inserted in the previous one, and reads as follows :

" 'Unto Israel, their Rabbanim, their disciples, and all their successors who diligently study the Torah, who are in this and every other place, may there be unto them, and to you, abundant peace, grace, favour, mercy, long life, salvation, enlarged maintenance, and salvation from the presence of the Lord of heaven and earth, Amen.' "

Rose took up the booklet that Miss Brunin gave her. She read it through, re-read it, put it down, placed both her hands on the table and said :

"Well, I call this a gigantic fraud, a swindle of the greatest magnitude and a tissue of lies, a first-class imposition ; I will call it a barefaced lie on the very face of it. Have you an idea how much of my life it has cost me ? Think for a moment what it means to me to know that my poor mother is not in hell, because the hell doctrine which has been manufactured for the purpose of the Kaddish, or *vice versa*, is just as big a lie as the Kaddish itself. Somehow,"

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she continued, " I feel that I owe something to my mother, that I must do something, but I do not know what. I feel that now I can and will do it."

Miss Brunin looked most pleasantly at the girl's heroic face, flushed with determination, and said, " My dearest Rose, think for a moment, what would give the greatest pleasure to your mother if she were alive ? " " Why, her greatest pleasure would be to see me happy, bright, and cheerful." " Well, my dear girl, I thoroughly believe that this is the case, and in order to please your mother, as if she were alive, be happy, bright, and cheerful. I am sure it will now please her still more to see you happy. She is not in need of your service, but your happiness she wants.

" That is the whole solution of the problem. After all, what are the aims which are at the same time duties ? They are, as Kant says, ' The perfection of ourselves and the happiness of others,' or to speak with the great American writer, ' The object of life is to be happy, the place to be happy is here, the time to be happy is now, the way to be happy is by making others happy.' "

Rose was silent, lost in her thoughts for some time, then she looked up at Miss Brunin, looked at her intensely for several seconds, and suddenly said, " You know, Anna, it seems to me I have seen you to-day for the first time. It seems to me that I have never seen you before."

Miss Brunin gave a cheerful laugh. " Is it so ? " " Yes, it seems to me that you are a different person, a person I have never known before." " Well," said Miss Brunin, " I think that I am the same as before, but perhaps you have changed ? " " Yes, I feel different," said Rose ; and so saying she stood up from her low chair and started dressing.

Miss Brunin was watching her. " What are you doing ? she asked. " Shiva is not yet over." " No, it is not over,"

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answered Rose, "but I do not think that my mother would like to see me in this gloomy, sad, and dejected state. I feel she is alive and wishes me to be happy, bright, and cheerful. I know this is her wish, and I must do it, because I want her to be happy too. Yes," she said, "I must go out, I must have fresh air." And they both went out together.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN.

The Story of the Double Conversion.

A FEW weeks after the last-described events, we again meet our two young ladies—Miss Brunin and Miss Lehrer. They are in far better spirits, and Miss Lehrer looks much brighter, although she still has some traces left of her trying time. She has recovered wonderfully from her depression, thanks to her cousin's loving efforts, and now seems to live neither in the past nor in the future.

Miss Brunin does her very best to uplift her cousin's mind, and continually cheers her up. The two girls have solved the mighty problem to their own satisfaction, at least for the time being. In their heart of hearts they still believe in the immortality of the soul, which, of course, means life beyond the grave, only they rejected the authority of the Rabbies, against whom Miss Brunin was inflamed. She considered the Rabbi's proofs as absurd and artificially stupid, based on superstition and glossary. They tried to grapple with the same subject from a scientific point of view, and to learn from men of great learning and with real investigating powers.

We find them perusing the esoteric Buddhism, the doctrine of Karma and reincarnation, as well as the great

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Indian teachers dealing with the same subject. Particularly are they interested in Mendelssohn's famous "Phædon," the discourse of Socrates with his disciples before his death concerning the immortality of the soul, and in many other famous works dealing with the same matter.

The young ladies received an invitation for this afternoon to visit a friend of theirs, Mrs. Croupnick, who is now "at home" to all her friends. Having arrived at the house, the two girls found several visitors already present, namely, Mrs. Goldstone, Mihma Esther, Mrs. Jacobson, a very smartly dressed lady of some education, a cousin of our hostess; Mrs. Taitelbaum, another cousin, also very smartly dressed, quite English in her ways, but very "particular" about her religion, as she is very fond of telling everybody; Mrs. Schifferblatt, who had been a school teacher previous to her marriage; Mrs. Sonnenstrahl, a tall, blonde lady of about thirty-five years, of whom it is being whispered that, although her husband and herself are young, they can already retire from business if they wish to, and that she is very charitable, but (in the same breath) that she can do it more than others, since she is childless, as is also the last visitor, Mrs. Shaitelmacher, an elderly lady, whose husband is a retired jeweller.

They were all having tea, and the conversation was, as usual, very lively, since the visitors had not seen one another for some time, and the hostess gave them many details about herself, while her friends in turn informed her of many happenings during her absence.

"What do you say to Mrs. Katzenallenbogen's brother?" remarked Mrs. Taitelbaum. "You mean about the shicksa?" inquired our hostess. "Yes," said her cousin. "What is it?" some of the ladies asked.

"I have heard something about it," several of them remarked. "Well," said Mrs. Taitelbaum, "it is rather an ugly story, but here it is. He did get into trouble with

a shicksa ! ” “ How does he come to a shicksa ? ” inquired Mrs. Goldstone. “ If I well remember, it was like this,” Mrs. Taitelbaum said. “ Mrs. Katzenallenbogen’s parents live at B——, at the seaside, and Charlie, their son, while out for a walk, noticed an elderly lady in the middle of the road. As she wanted to cross between two cars she lost her presence of mind, and would certainly have been killed by the horses, when Charlie rushed forward, and, at great personal risk, saved her. The old lady was overcome by his gallantry and the way he exposed his own life to save her. She therefore begged him to pay her a visit at the hotel where she was staying with her daughter, that she, too, should have the opportunity of expressing her gratitude for the heroic deliverance of her mother.

“ Of course, you know Charlie, he is a bit of an adventurer, and fond of a nice girl ; therefore he was curious to see her daughter, so he did not wait for a second invitation, but promised to call the very same day. After exchanging some nice words with the old lady, they eventually exchanged cards and he took leave after having promised to call soon. In the evening, according to his promise, he paid them a formal visit, and here the trouble started. The young lady, who seems to have been highly educated and very refined, received him very warmly, and thanked him with tears of gratitude for his kind help towards her mother. Her beauty, her charms, her excellent manners, her childlike simplicity and frankness soon made a great impression upon him.

“ They say that she is of extraordinary beauty, and her divine voice and musical attainments captivated him to such an extent that he became a frequent visitor to the house. And each time he became more enamoured of her, and, strange to say, the girl felt the same towards him. And so things went on, and here we are. . . . He got the better of her, she was weak, trusted him, and he, like

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all men, took advantage of her. What will you have? Poor Charlie is now in great perplexity, and, at the same time, he is exposed to the greatest danger." "How so?" inquired several ladies, interested. "Well," said Mrs. Taitelbaum, "she has a brother, an officer who is stationed in India, but he is expected home soon. He is undoubtedly a perfect gentleman, but one never knows what may happen. This man will certainly avenge his sister's honour; so there is only one way open to him, he either flees from the country or marries the girl." "You don't mean to say that he is going to marry a shicksa?" asked Mihma Esther, horrified at the very idea. "Surely, so deep the man couldn't have sunk?" "That is just the trouble," said Mrs. Taitelbaum, "it will mean bringing shame and disgrace upon the whole family. Poor Mrs. Katzenallenbogen was beside herself, she told me she is sure that her mother will die of aggravation." "Poor mother!" the ladies sympathized.

"Yes," she continued, "you must bear in mind that he is a member of the Duke's Place Synagogue, and well known to many of the Jewish clergy. He also belongs to various religious societies." "A real misfortune!" remarked Mrs. Sonnenstrahl. "So it is," she continued, "I am sure. If she would be a Jewess he would not be particular about the dowry—after all, he is not poor himself—but a shicksa, with little or no dowry. The only attraction in her is a nice face and education, but this would not do for them. Besides, he is a fine-looking boy, and his mother thought no girl is rich enough for her Charlie." "What a punishment for the poor mother!" again remarked Mrs. Sonnenstrahl. "Yes," said Mrs. Taitelbaum, "he did not dare to breath a word about it at home.

"In his great distress he confided his trouble to an intimate friend of his. They deliberated over it, and his

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friend hit upon an idea, as if by inspiration. 'Why, Charlie, let her become a Jewess, and the whole problem is solved! Your troubles will be at an end. Besides, think of it, it will be to your credit to have converted a Christian to Judaism, and, at the same time, you will have a Mitzwah into the bargain.' Of course, poor Charlie was simply delighted with this bit of encouraging news. He asked his father indirectly if this is really the case. His father affirmed it. He said that is a great Mitzwah, and added that having embraced Judaism, she becomes a Jewess in every respect. And what do you think of our shicksa," said Mrs. Taitelbaum, "who was, by the way, a Roman Catholic? She had not the slightest objection; in fact, she was eager to know more about the ancient religion of this wonderful people from which Christ and the Apostles were descended."

Some of the ladies were laughing. "Just like a shicksa!" remarked Mrs. Shaitelmacher. "I am afraid it will take her a long time to forget about her Christ," said Mrs. Schifferblat. "And his mother, too!" laughed Mrs. Sonnenstrahl.

"I know of a case," said Mrs. Jacobson, "where a shicksa became a Jewess, and on Christmas Eve she mechanically laid the table and lit candles like on a Friday night!" They all burst out laughing at this. "Use is second nature." "Yes," continued Mrs. Taitelbaum, "this shicksa is willing to receive all the necessary instruction from a competent person. I hear that they have approached Mihma Esther as the most suitable person for this purpose," said Mrs. Taitelbaum, turning towards the old lady.

"With pleasure have I undertaken this great Mitzwah," said Mihma Esther, "to bring a soul to the true living God. She is quite right—yes, we are a wonderful people, and God is not ashamed to call Himself the God of Israel. All the

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world knows that we are God's chosen people, and I am sure that she, too, is well aware of it.

"Our religion is the most ancient religion, from which all other religions have emanated ; our religion came direct from God Almighty, and has been expounded and enlarged by our Rabbies, blessed be their memory. I am sure that she will find in it a source of life and a guide to heaven. She will find that the Jewish religion, although the only true religion, is the most difficult one. There is so much to learn and such a lot of things to keep up that it will fill out all her life in serving God. And I do hope that in the merit of Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah, she will be a true and faithful Jewess and a credit to our nation. How wonderful are God's ways!" she exclaimed again in a musing tone. "This very wrong done to her by a Jewish man has turned out a blessing for her, and the cause of her salvation ; and this is what the Psalmist says, 'This is from the Lord, it is marvellous in our eyes,' " she concluded.

"It is remarkably true what Mihma Esther says," remarked Mrs. Shaitelmacher, "I wish all Christian women may be led to acknowledge the true Jewish religion." "But, alas," remarked Mrs. Schifferblatt, "so do I wish it, but what is the use to think about strangers when our own sisters are leaving the living God to marry Christians, and they become mothers of Christians?"

"Very sad," remarked our hostess. "Yes, and I know of a case where it actually did happen," again said Mrs. Schifferblatt, "and it is a very sad case indeed."

"You have heard of the family Primrose? You know very well what nice and refined people they are, and it is also well known that they are very well-to-do. Their only daughter, a charming girl—they gave her an excellent and liberal education. The girl was endowed with many gifts, and, intellectually, to say 'clever' is not the word for her.

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She had a tongue of fire, everyone was carried away by her conversation, and her friends gave her the nickname 'Demosthenes,' because she was very fond of debating. As it happened, next door to them lives a clergyman, a very educated gentleman. He is a graduate, I think, of Oxford University, and had also a German Ph.D. He was a very learned man and, what is very rare, a great Talmudical and Hebrew scholar. I found it out afterwards from a friend of mine that he, I mean the clergyman, while a youth was a Yeshivah Bochur (Jewish theological student). He had studied in a Rabbinical school, where he distinguished himself, and, subsequently, he was destined by the College to be ordained to become a Rabbi. He proceeded to Berlin, where he pursued his studies under Rabbi Hildesheimer, and took his degree in the University there. During this time he got acquainted with a certain Dr. Cassel, a clergyman of the Lutheran Church, who was a brother of Rabbi Cassel, a clergyman of the Jewish Synagogue. This Dr. Cassel, although being a converted Jew, defended the Jews against the attacks of the anti-Semites both with his pen and in the pulpit.

"He was a man of extraordinary ability, eloquent, and a powerful preacher. Our Rabbinical candidate was very much impressed with Dr. Cassel's activity, and with his writings. He soon got acquainted with the doctor, and the consequence was that he changed the Synagogue for the Church, and he resumed his study under the famous Franz Delitzsch, in Leipzig. From there he proceeded to England, where he was ordained as clergyman in the Episcopal Church, and subsequently became a Vicar of a certain church, and came to live, as I said, next door to the Primroses. His wife was a kind-hearted, simple lady, also intellectual and very musical. As near neighbours they got acquainted, and they exchanged books and music and were generally on friendly terms, which gradually

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turned into a kind of friendship, and the girl spent a great deal of time at their neighbour's house, to which the parents seemed to have no objection, not dreaming of the danger that threatened them and the terrible consequences.

"Well, to make a long story short, she sacrificed her parental home, her comfort, and her friends, and openly abjured her faith and embraced Christianity." Most of the ladies were sighing. "Now she, too, is married to a clergyman," said Mrs. Schifferblatt, "but I do not think that she can be happy on account of this." "I have heard of this lady," remarked Miss Brunin; "in fact I know her personally, and I have spoken to her more than once in her own home." "Oh, really! did you?" exclaimed Mrs. Jacobson. "Well!" she asked eagerly, "has she confided in you that she is sorry for the step she has taken and do you think that she will repent it one day?"

"Far from it," answered Miss Brunin, "she is more sorry for her parents that they cannot see the truth with her, as she expressed herself."

They all burst out laughing. "Well, what a funny way of looking at it," said Mrs. Jacobson, "she must have wonderful spectacles." Mihma Esther said, "How terrible!" "I think she is wicked," remarked Mrs. Taitelbaum. "Is she not afraid that she will one day have to die?"

"Of course she is aware that she will have to die," said Miss Brunin, "but as far as this is concerned, she takes it very easily." "And what did she say to you about her becoming a Christian?" inquired Mrs. Croupnick. "Does not her conscience prick her? Does she not consider it wrong?" "Just the opposite," remarked Miss Brunin, "as a matter of fact, she tried to convert me." At this remark they all burst out laughing. "Did you not reproach

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her for her action?" inquired Mrs. Sonnenstrahl, "for having left the living God of the Jewish religion?" "Of course I did," said Miss Brunin.

"And what did she have to say?" "That this was not the case; she insists that she is now a better Jewess than she has ever been." "Ha!" said Mihma Esther, "I see, in her heart. I should think so." "No!" said Miss Brunin, "she does not mean that, she means as a Christian." "How paradoxical!" remarked Mrs. Schifferblatt. "I think she is mad," said Mrs. Goldstone. "What is your opinion, Miss Brunin?" "I think she is quite sensible," said Miss Brunin, "she speaks sensibly." "How then is she a Jewess and a Christian at the same time? How ridiculous, she cannot be both." "Well, according to her explanation," said Miss Brunin, "it appears that she can be both." "Or neither," said Mrs. Goldstone.

"Please, Miss Brunin, do let us hear her argument," said Mrs. Taitelbaum, "I am sure that it will amuse us." "She said to me as follows:

"I am a Jewess, and belong to the Jewish race; I cannot undo my Semitic descent, no matter what my religious views may be, or to what school of thought I belong. The Jews were called Israelites long before they had any religion, when they were still in Egypt. They were called Jews even after they rejected the religion of their fathers and went over to Baal. The religion does not constitute a Jew, and as such he can never cease to be one.

"But if you think that the religion can turn a Gentile into a Jew, or a Jew into a Gentile—which means to say that a Gentile who is converted to Judaism becomes a spiritual Jew—herein I will agree with you, but with regard to myself, I have not abandoned the Jewish faith. What I did abandon was the Rabbinic system, the Oral

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Law, and I went back to the old Jewish faith, to the old Jewish Scriptures, to the religion of Moses and the Prophets.' ”

“ How ignorant she must be, as if the written Law and the oral Law, or the Mosaic and Rabbinic Law are not from the same source,” remarked Mihma Esther.

“ According to her version,” Miss Brunin continued, “ she says that our Judaism is the Old Testament explained according to the traditional Law ; Christianity is the Old Testament explained according to the new one.” “ What stupidity, what nonsense ! ” exclaimed Mrs. Sonnenstrahl. “ Why, as a Christian, she does *not* keep the Torah, the Law of Moses ! ” “ I pointed out to her the same thing,” said Miss Brunin. “ I told her that although racially she cannot cease to be of Semitic origin, spiritually, as a Jewess, she can lay no more claim to it, because she does not obey the Mosaic Law. But she pointed out to me that the Mosaic Law is not a religion but a law, which was given under certain circumstances to a particular people for a particular country, like any other law suitable for the needs of those people.

“ The Mosaic Law as such cannot be observed outside its own territory and jurisdiction ; there is no authority to uphold it. And even if it could be done, there is nothing gained by it, except the blessedness which every citizen enjoys for obeying the law of his respective country. The Mosaic Law never promised more than that ; since it is not a religion it can give us no salvation.

“ Then she further said,” continued Miss Brunin, “ ‘ Now, with regard to myself, I should like to make my point clearer that Christianity is not a religion of the Gentiles ; the founder of the same was not a Scotchman, nor was his mother an Irish woman. He was not a Gentile himself, but a Jew. Twenty centuries ago, just when our poor nation was torn to pieces by various religious and

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political sections, the nation was given over to gross ignorance, fed by superstition, a prey to Pharisaic sagacity and sanctimonious hypocrisy, who were the guardians of hell and heaven.

“ ‘ The people had become slaves to the letter of the Law, and their minds crippled by Rabbinic observances. At that particular time, a simple Rabbi, of obscure origin, belonging to no celebrated school of that time, appeared in the streets of Jerusalem with a few of his disciples, visiting their assemblies, important synagogues, and Temple, exhorted the people, preached to them with unusual eloquence after the manner of the Prophets, which went straight to their hearts.

“ ‘ His presence was soon felt, and he became the centre of attraction ; his sweet, gentle, and sympathetic personality won the hearts of large numbers who were fed up with Pharisaic squabbles and were hungry for spiritual food. People flocked to him from all over the country, and it soon became manifest that his teachings were in direct opposition to the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees, the leaders of Jewish thought.

“ ‘ They soon found themselves attacked most vigorously by this eloquent Rabbi, exposing their teaching and their hypocrisy ; in fact, the whole Jewish Church, priesthood, and their spiritual leaders were not spared.

“ ‘ His success was enormous, and the Jewish authorities looked upon him as a menace. This very Rabbi, who has made the world's history as no other mortal did, proclaimed himself the Messiah, the saviour of the world. His opponents, the ecclesiastical power, the priests, the teachers of the people, the Pharisees—in fact, the whole Jewish authority—made up their minds to get rid of him. They dared not lay hands on him for fear of the people, but they accused him of sedition, calling himself “ The Messiah,” the self-appointed King.

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“ ‘ They accused him before the Roman authorities, and they succeeded in their vengeance ; and thus died the noblest, purest, and holiest Son of Israel—a most humiliating, a most cruel and shameful death, the death of a common criminal, hanged or nailed down to a tree,’ she concluded,” said Miss Brunin.

“ A good job, too ! ” exclaimed Mrs. Goldstone. “ I think he deserved it,” joined Mrs. Schifferblatt. “ A pity that those who followed him didn’t meet with the same end,” added Mrs. Taitelbaum. “ ‘ But,’ she continued further,” said Miss Brunin, “ ‘ they thought that in this way they had got rid of him, his teachings destroyed, his adherents discouraged and dispersed, and there the story would end. But no, there the story began. Those people who were carried away by the great master, who gave him a great ovation when he entered Jerusalem as King, shouting Hosannah, were probably the same, incited by Pharisees, who were yelling Crucify him ! Crucify him ! After this first shock was over, and the populace calmed down, they began to reflect they could not find anything which could have justified their behaviour towards him, and they soon found out that they were only used as an instrument in the hands of the Pharisees.

“ ‘ The more they thought the affair over, the more they realized their cruel behaviour towards that saintly Rabbi, who only had their spiritual welfare at heart. It seems that all the people in Jerusalem were deeply moved and repentant. This went on for weeks. His most prominent and devoted disciples, who were first stunned and afterwards horror-stricken by this cruel and unexpected event, were hiding in Jerusalem, but six weeks’ later, on the day of Pentecost, they suddenly appeared in the centre of the city and addressed themselves to the populace as men who had regained their courage by a great victory. They did not feel themselves any more abandoned and

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deprived of their head, but, on the contrary, their master lived, and he lived in them. With this internal conviction, heroically despising all danger, they addressed themselves vehemently to the people; they appealed to their conscience with such force, inspired and inflamed with such a holy enthusiasm, and to the astonishment of all Jerusalem, they proclaimed their Master, the Risen One, as the very Messiah of Israel, the Saviour of Mankind.

“ ‘The result was enormous. Five thousand Jewish souls cried out on that memorable day, “Men and Brethren, what shall we do?” The same thing happened the following day, when eight thousand Jews declared themselves on the side of the Redeemer, and the numbers increased daily. Thus was laid the foundation of the Messianic Church in the very heart of Jerusalem, six weeks after the crucifixion.

“ ‘The enemies, the existing authorities, saw in this turn of events their own destruction, and resolved like cowards to persecute the leaders of this newly-founded Messianic Church. Some of the disciples were brought before a Council of Judges. Then stood there up one of the Council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the Law, a man of great reputation amongst the people, and commanded to put the Apostles forth a little space, and said unto them, “Ye men of Israel, take heed of yourself what you intend to do as touching these men.”

“ ‘After having referred to other false leaders and their end, he said with regard to the Messengers, “Refrain from these men, and let them alone, for if this Council or this work be of men, it will come to naught, but if it be of God, you cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.”

“ ‘Thus was the Christian Church established in the very heart of Jerusalem by its Founder, who was himself a Jew. The Apostles were Jews, the first preachers of the

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Gospel were all Jews, who preached first to the Jews, out of the Jewish Scriptures, concerning Christ the Jew, the King of Jews.

“ ‘ You see, my dear,’ she continued, ‘ it is not true that all the Jews have rejected their Messiah, only a part of our nation have rejected him. I wish to impress upon your mind that the original church, as you see, consisted entirely of Jewish men and women ; it was a Hebrew Christian church. The first martyrs of the Messianic Church were Jews, and as Jews they were persecuted, suffered, and died for their Master. Now,’ she said, triumphantly, ‘ what would Rabbi Gamaliel say now ? Is it from God ? Look, after twenty centuries, what became of our Hebrew Christian Church, first established in Jerusalem ? Like sheep amongst the wolves we went out, not only in Palestine, but throughout the whole Roman Empire. Both Jew and Gentile tried to destroy us, annihilate us, but could they ? Look how our Gospel has triumphed ; look at the hundred of millions of worshippers we have gained for our Master amongst the heathens. Look at the many million churches, domes, cathedrals, and numberless sacred buildings erected to the Glory of Him.

“ ‘ It is true,’ ” she said to me, continued Miss Brunin, “ ‘ that not all Christians are Christians, but the fact remains that Jesus is the central point of Christendom. Do you not think that it is unnatural, if not inexplicable, that a rejected son of a despised people, who expired like a criminal on the gallows, should become the centre of worship and adoration of the whole civilized world ?

“ ‘ But the explanation is here,’ she said. ‘ It has been promised to the Jewish Messiah that he will become the desire of all nations, a light amongst the Gentiles. Do you really think,’ she asked me, ‘ that the whole Christian world would allow itself to be misled by a deceived deceiver—a Jew executed twenty centuries ago should still have the

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sway in millions of hearts who worship him, if he would not be the one of whom Moses and the Prophets have spoken ?

“ ‘ Now, if our Master were not the anointed one, but one of the false Jewish Messiahs, how is it,’ she asked, ‘ when we look round, that Israel, the sole possessor of the truth, for twenty centuries most stubbornly has fought against this Messiah ? And see how they are now. Are they not humiliated, homeless, and despised ? Are they not driven out from one country, and refused admittance to another ? Are they not a by-word amongst the nations ? I ask you, is this the reward for their resistance ? Look upon the Christian nations, how they are flourishing. Each has his little principality, kingdom, laws, republic, or empire. Is this their punishment for adoption of the false Messiah ? What about the justice of God and the love for His ancient people for their faithfulness ?

“ ‘ Seventeen false Messiahs, it is recorded, have led astray many of our people, of whom three are still in our memory. The last but one, whom Rabbi Akiba proclaimed, has brought the greatest calamities upon the Jews, far greater than the destruction of the two Temples. The second of the Messiahs became a Mohammedan, and made a laughing stock of the whole Jewry. Now,’ she further said, ‘ if it was possible for the Jews to err seventeen times with regard to the false Messiahs, could they not have erred once more in rejecting the true one ? Now look at the result of our Hebrew Christian Church, look at the success of our evangel amongst the Gentiles.

“ ‘ All the Christian world are our converts—they have accepted our God, our Messiah, our prophets. Our Scriptures and our Psalms are chanted in their houses of worship. But our mission has not yet ended,’ she continued, ‘ there is much to be done yet. There is much

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heathenism and abuse in the Christian Church, and it is left for us Jews to step in and bring order into the chaos. It is left to us Jews to cleanse and purify our Messianic Church and to present it back to our Master as we have received it. But for you—Orthodox, Pharisaic and Rabbinic Jews,' she addressed me personally," said Miss Brunin, "' what have you done for the world, for the extension of God's Kingdom? How far have you benefited the world with your Talmud and Shulchan Aruch? What is your prospect? Do you think Palestine will solve the problem? I doubt it.

" 'Remember,' she further said to me, ' that that little strip of Palestine is no bigger than little Wales, which hardly can keep up a population of three millions, particularly the Zionistic Palestine, which is only the western part of the Jordan, comprising Judea, Samaria, and Galilee, with its total area of 5,400 square miles already well populated by the non-Jews.

" 'Suppose a million or even two millions of Zionists could be squeezed in. Let us even say, for the sake of a miracle, you will get three millions in. What about the other twelve million Jews scattered all over the world. Perhaps the Jewish question may be solved as far as the Palestine Jews are concerned. But remember that Palestine is just as sacred to the Christians and Mohammedans, as the Holy Land is full of sacred memories bound up with their religious faith, and they are the inhabitants of the country, children of the soil.

" 'Palestine is the abode of all Christian sects, full of sacred places, such as churches, convents and mosques, while to you all these things are pollutions and abominations. The Bishops and all the leaders of the churches see in Zionism a great peril to Christianity. And so do the Arabs consider it as a hostile invasion, a betrayal of unscrupulous politicians. Nobody trusts you! Nobody wants

you! Everybody wants to get rid of you, and you are looked upon as undesirables.

“ ‘Two thousand years ago, Agrippa the Second was the last Jew whom the Romans appointed as their Commissioner over Palestine. When war broke out, he sided with the Romans. Twenty centuries later Great Britain appointed her Commissioner to Palestine, who is also a Jew. His first heroic deed and first reform he introduced in the Holy Land was the institution of the Jewish Sabbath as an official day of rest, with an utter disregard for the whole population of the country, of which his co-religionist brethren form but a small percentage. This, indeed, is a very sad beginning of what will undoubtedly soon follow when Zionism will assert its powers. Do you think that with such a spirit you will be able to live happily and contented? I do not think so,’ she said to me. ‘Let me tell you once more that the Jewish question is the “Christ’s” question; the one is intimately connected with the other. Let us hope that in the near future a more enlightened Jew, a Jew endowed with a different spirit, will occupy this most responsible position, and will re-open the trial of his brother Jesus, where purer and nobler men will sit as judges, and Christ’s claims will be recognized. And then, as Hebrew-Christians, as such you may become a nation amongst nations, trusted and beloved, co-workers with the Christians for the welfare of humanity. If you think that Judaism as a religion may turn out a blessing amongst the Gentiles, particularly in Palestine, then let me remind you of the words of Heine, that Judaism is not a religion, but a misfortune,’ and, finally, she made a passionate appeal to me to come over to the Messianic Church and help to bring light to our brethren.”

Most of the ladies burst out laughing. “She wants you to become a Church worker, eh?” said Mrs. Sonnenstrahl. “In our street calls always such a person, who leaves some

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tracts under the door, but *who* takes notice of them?" "Or, perhaps, a Salvation Army lass!" added Mrs. Taitelbaum, amidst the merriment of the company. "How ripping!" remarked Mrs. Jacobson. "And what did you answer her?" inquired Mrs. Croupnick. "Why, I could not argue with her," said Miss Brunin, "because I am not well enough versed in the Scriptures to prove to her that our religion is true. I spoke to her about the great moral teaching of our holy Law, but she parried away this point and said that moral precepts do not constitute a religion.

"'They are common property,' she said. 'It has been taught in all ages by all wise men. The heathens had great moral teachers, and yet they knew nothing about the true religion.'" "Oh," said Mrs. Sonnentrahl, "What tommy rot, what rubbish, I call it." "She ought to come and argue with Mihma Esther," remarked Mrs. Goldstone. "She would soon fall flat with her Hebrew-Christian nonsense. I wonder if she would dare to?" "Would she not!" said Miss Brunin, laughing. "She would only be too glad at the opportunity to do so."

Mihma Esther became thoughtful, and said, "I rather don't wish to hear her talk. I don't wish to see her trifah ponim (polluted face), let her stay away. . . ."

"Have you heard of Mr. Epstein's model of Christ?" inquired Mrs. Taitelbaum. "Epstein!" exclaimed Mihma Esther, "that sounds like a Jew. How comes he to make a model of the Tola (hanged one)?" "He sold it for over £2,000," continued the lady, "to an unknown purchaser." "I should not be surprised if he is also a Jew," remarked Miss Brunin smilingly.

"Well," said Mrs. Jacobson, "the critics, it seems, were not very pleased with the idea of his vision of Christ." "I believe," said Miss Brunin, "that he is perhaps nearer the truth than the Italian masters; being a Jew his prophetic vision of Him might be more correct."

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The ladies were now getting ready to take their leave. "Now I can see that history repeats itself," remarked Mrs. Schifferblatt. "There is always a Jew who must be in it. Miss Brunin may be right. Even in the sculptural world we have it. A Jew created a new vision of Christ, and I daresay it is another Jew who accepted him and paid heavily for it."

"A Jew at the beginning, a Jew at the end." "And I say that it is a shame," said Mihma Esther, "for it is strictly forbidden in the Ten Commandments to make new gods."

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN.

An Edifying Evening at Mihma Esther's on a Particular Occasion.

OUR readers have had the opportunity to meet this worthy lady on more than one occasion, and undoubtedly must have observed how the others greatly honoured and respected her, even looking up to her with reverence, and almost with veneration. Her godliness and piety ; her self-discipline and self-denial ; her regular fasting twice weekly when the scroll of the Law is read in the Synagogue ; her many charitable deeds, and the liberality for which she was well known, greatly contributed to her popularity. No wonder that many called her the Tzadakes (Saint). And so was her husband a God-fearing man, strictly orthodox, of the old school, deeply religious, very learned, and highly esteemed by his co-religionists.

Mihma Esther (literally, Aunty Esther), and her husband are both descendants of a stock of very learned and famous Rabbies, whose line could be traced back to the Middle

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Ages. Her husband was the grandson of that famous Rabbi who was the head of the celebrated Rabbinical College in the vicinity of Kovna, renowned for the great men and authors it produced. And so from his mother's side could be counted a whole chain of Rabbies and great divines many centuries back.

Mihma Esther's pedigree was still superior, particularly on account of the wonder Rabbi known as the great Kabbalist, with whom we will acquaint our readers in due course. Mihma Esther and her husband left their country about forty years earlier, when the Jews underwent great persecution, and settled down in free England—England of forty years back, where Anti-Semitism was a mere name, only to be found in the dictionary. Both worked hard, very hard, in their younger days, and by perseverance and thrift managed to retire from business in order to devote the remainder of their days to the service of the Lord. Both belonged to various religious societies. Aunt Esther had her particular ones, while her husband could devote his whole time to the study of the Holy Law. She, on the other hand, moved about more freely, attending religious meetings, weddings of poor orphan girls, visiting the sick or poor confined women, and taking great interest in the Talmud Torah, a Hebrew school where religious instruction is given. This latter she considered of primary importance, the merit for it being so great.

She strictly followed the precepts as laid down in the prayer book, as to do this is of unlimited merit. "These were also Commandments of which, when men perform them, they enjoy the interest in this world while the principal remains in the world to come."

These, because of their reward, Mihma Esther was most particular to fulfil. She belonged also to the Chevra Kaddisha (burial society or, literally, Holy Brotherhood), which included among its members women who perform

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the ritual ablutions of dead females and the sewing of the shrouds or Tachrichem. The Tachrichem, the very name of which fills the Jewish soul with fear and awe, is the garment in which the corpse is wrapped when laid out in the coffin. By the Jews the dead are not buried in their best clothes ; indeed, no cloth whatever is used.

It is the Tachrichem which serves the purpose. It consists of a linen shirt roughly cut out and sewn, socks, and cap of the same material, which varies only with a bride, whose head is covered with a veil. The men, in addition to this, are also wrapped up in their Tallit, or prayer shawl, minus one of the four fringes. On these occasions friends, relatives, and neighbours who visit the bereaved ones are expected to pay their last honour and tribute to the departed one.

The last service would consist in helping to sew the shrouds, a very unpleasant affair indeed (as mentioned), to handle this garment reminding them that they, too, will have to leave all their costly garments and furs and don this shroud, the very look of which spells death.

The women of the Kaddisha, a very crafty lot, taking advantage of this fact, place a plate on a table for those who, instead of helping in the sewing of the Tachrichem, desire to contribute to the Holy Brotherhood which do the work for them.

But Mihma Esther did both ; she contributed freely and did the work. Our dear lady, who was punctual and conscientious in everything she did, was always at the death-bed of dying mothers to say Viddoi (confession) and pray with them. She used to point this out to her friends, saying, " One must always be ready in case it pleases God to ask the soul to leave its body in order to give account of how it passed its terrestrial life."

She also followed the famous injunction of the great Rabbi that " Everyone must be repentant before the death,

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and, since we do not know when death will overtake us, our life must always be a life of repentance," which means doing Mitzwahs (a Mitzwah is a precept to which a reward is attached in the future world), of which there are 613, corresponding to the 613 seeds of a pomegranate.

Mihma Esther was always ready and prepared should she, God forbid, be suddenly overtaken by death ; her will was made, by which all the religious societies will benefit ; even the Tachrichem were ready, carefully wrapped up and put away in a drawer, only to be taken out occasionally when shown to friends, on whom the effect was awe-inspiring and terrible. She also had a little bag which contained ashes from the soil of the Holy Land, which in case of death should be placed under her head. In this, of course, she was not extraordinary, she being not the only one who has secured this valuable asset. There are many in England who avail themselves of the opportunity to secure this precious earth from pious travellers from the Holy Land.

Some of the English Jewish peers are known to possess a quantity of it, and many more notabilities of the Anglo-Jewish community. The reasons are twofold. First, as is written in the Mosaic Law, it has a saving power ; then, according to the Oral Law, when the Messiah will come there will be a resurrection of the dead, then all the bodies will not have to roll to the Holy Land. . . Mihma Esther always commemorated the death of the famous Rabbi to whom we have referred in a befitting manner, on which occasion she used to have a large circle of lady friends, when she related to them the wonderful life of her great ancestor.

To-day is the anniversary of the death of that great saint ; everything is ready for the reception. The room where Mihma Esther received her guests was spacious and spotlessly clean and was furnished with old-fashioned large

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pieces of solid mahogany furniture. On a massive side-board there were several silver articles, amongst which were most to be noted several silver candlesticks, also one "Menorah," a candlestick consisting of a central branch and three minor ones on either side of it, a miniature of the holy candlestick which was used in the Temple, a candle-abrum ; also a curiously engraved "Chanucah" candlestick, with seven cavities for Chanucah candles, and an antique piece of silver in the shape of a miniature tower, the "Psamin Dosè" for the "Havdolah," pierced with numerous holes, which contained spices, mostly cloves, and a silver-nickelled "Samovar." The walls were hung with enlarged pictures of venerable-looking Jews with long beards and bushy eyebrows, with skull caps on their heads, all of them belonging to the generations of a past century ; and a "Mizrach," a picture printed with Hebrew letters, looking like a gate, always hanging on the east wall, to indicate the direction of the Holy Land ; and a big bookcase containing massive "Sforim" (big folios), belonging to her husband.

In a corner, on a small table, was a glass containing oil, in which glimmered a kind of night-light, "the Yahrtzeit." This completed the reception room, unless we include the big "Mezuzah" on the door. On the table was a large tray with sweet liquors and glasses and home-made cakes. Mihma Esther, dressed in black silk, wearing old-fashioned jewellery, all heirlooms, with a friendly, serene, and calm face, was receiving her guests. In order not to tax the reader with the various names of the guests, they are nearly all well known except a few who had not been invited.

The guests were all invited to take seats round the table, and, after having been served with some refreshments, Mihma Esther herself sat down in the place of honour at the head of the table. She placed a little old-fashioned jewel-case on the table and slowly opened it, which proceedings

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were followed with profound interest and reverence, if not awe, by the ladies.

In the case was visible an old-fashioned cameo—a charm, inscribed with Hebrew letters, resting on a velvet background. It was handed round for inspection. The ladies took it up reverently, and some kissed it and handed it on, until it was handed back to Mihma Esther, who said, "This relic is a most treasured talisman in possession in our family, which has been handed down for the last three centuries from generation to generation, and of which I, being the only child of my parents, am the latest possessor, which, again, I hope to bestow in turn upon my Kaddish, my son, who is at present in Palestine.

"This cameo," she said in a reverent tone, "was blessed by the holy Itzchak Menahem, blessed be his memory." Here she paused. Then Mihma Esther began to explain the meaning of the evening and gradually drifted into the narrative of the life of that holy man, which was so extraordinary, so marvellous, so full of miraculous incidents, so wonderful in its detail, that it would be impossible to repeat it as it was related by her.

Amongst other things she told them that through the deep study of the "Cabalah," the "Zohar," the book of "Yetziras," and the knowledge of the Sacred Number, he got possession of the "Shem Hamphoresh," that terrible power which the "Tola" (hanged One, referring to Christ) had secured in the Temple out of the Holy of Holies, and which enabled him to perform the miracles, as we have it by tradition. By his deep knowledge of the basic law of transmigration of the soul, he could detect the various souls of a pre-existence which have been reincarnated in various animals as a punishment, and by his intervention he was able to liberate many a soul.

Once he passed through some marshes ; there were many frogs jumping about, and amongst these, by looking intensely

at one of them, he recognized one of his colleagues of a previous birth, long before the destruction of the second Temple, when they were together listening to discourses of Shmaiah and Abtalion. This great pupil of the greatest of the masters of the Talmud had neglected that precept of the washing of hands, and therefore it had been adjudged that his soul should enter into a frog and as such he should live many centuries. It was through the Tzaddik's intervention that he was liberated from his incarceration, and his soul, after resuming its former shape, returned to its proper rest amongst the saints, to which place he belonged, because he had conscientiously performed all commands but this one. When the great Rabbi Akiba had been incarcerated in the Roman prison, before having been tortured to death, the prison warder allowed him a certain quantity of water per day to quench his thirst. This water, instead of drinking, he applied to perform the Mitzwah of washing the hands. Amongst the many liberated souls, Mihma Esther further related, there was a particular one.

It happened when the great Tzaddik with two of his disciples were resting at the entrance of a forest. Bats were swarming round them persistently. The disciples at once recognized that this was not a mere incident, because the bats had followed them from a distance. "Rabbi!" asked one of his disciples, "What does this signify?" The Rabbi answered, "This big bat," pointing to one of them, "is crying most piteously, although none of you hear its voice. It implores for redemption. She was the daughter of a heathen King who was at war with one of our Jewish Kings two hundred and some years before the destruction of the first Temple. After her father's army had been defeated, the King made prisoner and put to death, his daughter, a most beautiful girl, was given as a slave to one of the King's concubines.

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Through her charms she captivated the King, who, being carried away by her, promoted her to be one of his concubines. In some way or other, with the help of witchcraft and poison, she managed to get rid of her rivals and the King made her one of his wives. She carried her witchcraft into the palace, into the very court of the King, whom she also bewitched. She was subsequently detected and, on the command of the King, was strangled on account of her trying to introduce her ancestors' gods and to turn away the heart of the King from the Jewish God. This is the wicked one," said the Tzaddik, "and her associates, who underwent punishment by constantly evolving from the lowest reptile up to the present form of a bat. What do you think?" he asked of his disciples. "Shall we liberate them? For I find that in their lifetime they had been generous to the lepers, pitied the blind, and sympathized with the cripples."

"Do, Rabbi!" the disciples asked of him, "they have suffered enough." The Rabbi lifted his eyes towards heaven and remained so for some time, and lo! all the seven bats, for such was their number, fell down with a crash to the ground, lifeless. The Tzaddik then ordered that a grave be dug and that they should be buried therein. Here ended their transmigration, which had lasted for many centuries; their souls received peace at last.

Mihma Esther went further into the life of the Tzaddik. He very frequently left his body of his own free will, which he could throw off like a garment when he had to have intercourse with disembodied souls, or as the occasion demanded it, and he could enter into other bodies. He could make himself invisible and could roam in any region and pay a visit to any star he liked. He could enter and leave hell without being hurt and enter into paradise without being interfered with by the angels at the gate, where he spent most of his time with the prophet

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Elijah, discussing the great problems and mysteries of the Law. Having acquired the mastery over Nature's forces, all the elements were at his command and the angels attended on him daily. When his earthly sojourn was at its termination, he left his body in his seventieth year for ever, and entered paradise with a great ovation from angels and archangels, surrounded by the "Shechinah" (Divine Glory). Mihma Esther ended her narrative here, with deep emotion.

The pupil of Mihma Esther, the future wife of our dear Charlie, still a "shicksa," because she was yet under instruction and had not yet become a Jewess, remarked, "Well, I have read a great many legends about the saints of our Church, but I must admit that yours is a super-saint, and beats all our saints."

Mihma Esther and the whole company said "Lahavdile." The whole company were much impressed and very moved, often struck with awe and horror by the ghostly stories, particularly with the terrible agonies, torments, tortures of the souls in the underworld, of which we will spare our readers the narration.

Miss Brunin on the other hand was unperturbed. It appeared that these edifying discourses had just the opposite effect upon her. When we hear her relating to Miss Lehrer, who had not been present on that particular evening, the life of the super-saint, shorn of its various miracles, marvellous and supernatural achievements, and removing all the wonderful powers ascribed to him, leaving out the ministering angels, the command over the spirit world, and giving the bare outline in a very concise form as well as her comment on it, we must come to the conclusion that she was not fit to be party to that company. "The great Tzaddik," said Miss Brunin to Miss Lehrer, "was undoubtedly what we would call a prodigy child, with a most receptive and retentive mind. As a youth he seemed to

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have manifested great mental powers ; he undoubtedly must have in due time developed his brilliant faculties to such a pitch that he became almost supernatural. He acquired the habit of strong concentration and developed great will-power. Mihma Esther made him out to be a reincarnated disciple of Hillel.

“ He seemed to have been inclined by nature to mysticism, and, following his natural inclination, studied ‘ Cabalah ’ and its kindred science Occultism, in which he seemed to have become an adept.

“ He freed himself from the turmoil of the world with all its temptations, miseries, worries, and sought out a place of seclusion where he, undisturbed, could give himself over to fasting, prayer, and meditation. Here the battle began with himself, through himself. It was a tremendous fight to kill passion, ambition, and desires. He hardened his flesh and gradually became insensible to all natural desires, his perceptions became sharpened and developed in an extraordinary manner. In fact, he seemed to have become all soul and little body.

“ He developed through constant concentration and meditation his second sight, known as clairvoyance, as well as clairodience ; he became a kind of Mahatma, an occultist of the first rank and a conscious medium. He was undoubtedly a rare specimen, but not one of the rarest. He must have possessed great hypnotic powers, that even wild beasts were charmed by his magnetic eye, and in the same way he could make himself visible and invisible, like one of those Indian fakirs who could hypnotize a whole crowd and make them see what he wished them to see, as, for instance, when he flung up a rope towards the sky, on which he made a boy climb up higher and higher until they both disappeared, boy and rope together. Again,” said Miss Brunin, “ with regard to his being able to appear at a place, while in reality he was somewhere else, the fact has

been proved over and over again by the Psychical Research Society that it often happens to persons without their being conscious of it. But in most cases, as has been proved beyond any shadow of doubt, after investigating them carefully on a scientific basis, they have arrived at the conclusion that it is a matter of thought projection or telepathy which explains cases where the so-called 'dead' appear. These are, after all, only a projecting thought-force of the person who may be in great danger while still alive or before life becomes extinct; it was the generative thought-force of that person (of course still alive, mind you, Rose)," said Miss Brunin, "which was the cause of the 'apparition.'

"And in some cases the impression or influence of that particular person may remain long after his death in a certain object belonging to that person, such as belt, slippers, a piece of turban, a weapon, an idol, or mirror, etc., which certain persons more or less sensitive may feel. A psychometrist is able to explain the nature of it by coming into contact with the object.

"With regard to his power over the spirit world and the mastery over Nature's forces, his command over the elements, which Mihma Esther described in glowing terms," said Miss Brunin further, "I saw in it only a repetition of the spiritualistic 'séance.' Here, while the medium is in a trance, invisible powers defy the law of gravitation, heavy articles are moved from one place to another, and remain suspended in the air or disappear altogether. Of course, it is a phenomenon, and it is ascribed to spirits. But these same elementals seem to be endowed with these powers only when the medium is in a trance, whilst it is probably this very medium who causes all the manifestations. She may be a weak, fragile person, yet there is something undefinable, some vitality which emanates from her while in a trance. Still, it is a phenomenon.

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“ But our Tzaddik must have been a kind of a Guru and a conscious medium to have produced all these phenomena in a waking state. Now, concerning the mastery over Nature’s forces and his command over the elements and the wonderful feats which Mihma Esther told us he could perform by passing through fire and water, even if they be true, they are nothing new in their nature,” said again Miss Brunin. “ You have heard, I dare say, about that particular caste in India, among whom at a certain feast which happens once a year the priests perform certain rites by walking through a furnace, as has been related by many European travellers and eye-witnesses, English Civil Service officials. The heat of the furnace is so intense that a green tree placed at a fair distance shrivels up, yet these priests walk about in the flames as in a garden and emerge unhurt, a fact which seems to be inexplicable. But the solution undoubtedly is this, these priests are lying either in a trance somewhere else in a cave or in some safe place, or they are wide awake and by their power of concentration they can materialize their thoughts, or they send their double to appear in that furnace, while they themselves are somewhere else. This has been proved numberless times by men of the Psychical Research Society, who show that a person has appeared in another place while he was at home, either awake or asleep. Consciously or unconsciously his double may appear and make itself felt, and even, as it is recorded, speak and move about.

“ These priests undoubtedly were trained, and so was our Rabbi—of course assuming that what Mihma Esther related about the Rabbi was true. But what impressed the ladies most,” said Miss Brunin, “ was when she related that when the Tzaddik was still a student and expounded the Law, angels surrounded him and used to listen to him and were jealous of him ; so that his father had to cover him with the prayer shawl, in order that they should not give him the evil eye ! ”

CHAPTER NINETEEN.

The Ladies are Discussing Important Religious Topics.

MRS. SONNENSTRAHL has a social gathering, as to the purpose of which we are not quite clear ourselves ; we leave it to the reader to find out.

There are a goodly number of the ladies present, all well known to the reader, who are discussing Mihma Esther's evening. Some of them have not yet recovered from the shock they had, some assured their listeners that their nerves were very much shaken by what they had heard, others assured them that they had passed many a sleepless night, always were haunted by the terrible tales they had heard.

"I have made up my mind," said Mrs. Taitelbaum, "since then never to manicure my nails. After what I have heard, to think that so many souls were wandering about looking for their nails, which they had recklessly thrown away, without knowing of the terrible consequences, the punishment which awaits them." "Yes," remarked Mrs. Jacobson, "they had to come back to this world, to their old abode, and search for them." "Now I remember," said Mrs. Paisterman, "why my grandmother, should rest in peace, when she cut her nails, used to be very careful that not one should get lost, and therefore collected them in a piece of paper, wherein she put a few small pieces of wood as witnesses, and burnt them."

"And I can assure you, ladies," said Mrs. Croupnick, "I could not forget the story related by Mihma Esther

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about the Jewish pauper who cared nothing for religion and was addicted to all vices. When he died, of course nobody was sorry for him. He was dragged away in a rough coffin and the 'Chevra Kaddisha' men ran up with it to the cemetery without stopping once, as if to get rid of it as soon as possible; not a living soul followed him. When they came outside the town, they met the Tzaddik; he was not yet revealed to the people. No sooner did the holy man see the dismal procession than he threw himself over the corpse, threw his arms about, as if to ward off something, lamented and cried piteously, which, of course, frightened the men and filled them with awe and terror. The news, of course, soon spread in the town, and the people were wondering, but nobody dared to ask the reason.

"Soon afterwards it happened that the great Rabbi of the town, the head of the community, died, a very religious and God-fearing man, known for his great learning and piety. Naturally, the whole town was in mourning, young and old went out to give the great Rabbi the last honour, which was done with great lamentations. His coffin was carried by four of the best known citizens in the town, who walked slowly, stopping now and again, and there were many eager to have the honour of carrying the holy burden. When they came outside the town, they were again met by the holy man, who perceiving them, fell into ecstasy for joy and excitement and danced before the bier, like King David had danced before the Holy Ark. The whole multitude was amazed. After the funeral was over, the most distinguished citizens were discussing the affair and the inexplicable behaviour of the holy man, but they did not dare to ask him the reason.

"At last they decided to send a deputation consisting of the most distinguished men from amongst them to inquire about it. They went to the holy man, who received them very friendly and asked their desire. 'Rabbi!' one

of the men said, 'I hope you will not be angry at the liberty we are taking, but we wish to know the reason for your extraordinary behaviour at the two funerals.' 'With pleasure will I explain,' said the holy man.

" 'When I saw the corpse of that wastrel and good-for-nothing fellow, I noticed myriads of demons hovering over him and they were trying to pull his soul and tear it to pieces. I tried to ward them off, but the more I tried the more they multiplied, and seeing the terrible tortures of that poor soul and thinking of the punishment which awaited it, my heart cried out in pity. But when I saw the Tzaddik borne along and perceived how good angels, numberless, were dancing along in front of him, with joy and gladness heralding his coming, and his soul wrapped up in pure white, and serene, my heart swelled for joy, seeing what awaits the righteous man when he dies, and I danced with the angels.'

"The messengers were awestruck; they knew that he was a holy man." "He was a saintly man," said Mrs. Schifferblatt. "I was also very much impressed with the other weird tale about the ghostly woman.

"It prevented me from sleeping the whole night—I mean about the woman that died. A poor Jew with his wife lived in a remote village in Lithuania. They had their hut at the bottom of a mountain far away from any habitation. Once his wife was taken ill with fever; there was no living being near them, and he could not get any help. She went off into a state that appeared to him as death. As it is well known, we Jews must not leave our dead alone without being watched. The poor man did not know what to do, as he had to go to the next village where there were Jews for the necessary arrangements for the funeral, and he was compelled to leave her body alone. When he returned he found her sitting up, to his amazement. She told him that she must have been asleep and that, although

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she still felt weak, she was quite wide awake now. She improved after her illness, and they lived happily for years and had three children. It happened once that the holy man passed through the village, and it being Friday afternoon he stayed with our Jew over the Sabbath. The holy man looked strangely at the wife and children but was silent. When they were going to have supper the Rabbi needed wine to say the blessing, and the Jew sent his wife to the cellar to fetch the wine. She went, but failed to return. He waited, and since she still stayed away, he sent his eldest boy to look for his mother . . . he, too, failed to return. After having sent his second and third boy, and neither of them returning, the Jew became alarmed and asked the holy man what was the cause of it.

" 'Come down to the cellar,' the Rabbi said in a solemn tone, 'and I will show you the reason.' When they went down, they found no one there, but the Rabbi pointed to four little heaps of ashes, saying, 'This bigger heap is that of your wife and the smaller ones are your children.' He further said to the horror-stricken man, 'When your wife died some years ago you left the body alone, unwatched. The Evil One went into her body, and you have begotten with her three evil spirits. I knew of it long ago,' said the Rabbi, in the same strain, 'but now was the time to liberate these poor souls, peace be to their ashes.' " "How awful! how creepy!" were the remarks of the ladies, many of whom were shuddering. "Indeed, he was a Wonder Rabbi."

"What was Miss O'Brien's impression of the Tzaddik?" inquired Mrs. Reddish. "It must have made a deep impression upon her," said Mrs. Sonnenstrahl, "for she said, 'I have read many legends about the saints of our Church, but I must admit that yours is a super-saint and beats ours.' " "I should think so!" said Mrs. Croupnick. "What a comparison!" remarked Mrs. Jacobson. "Fancy

the goieshka saints and such a Tzaddik ! ” “ Who is Miss O'Brien ? ” inquired Mrs. Trooper of our hostess. “ The shicksa whom Charlie is going to marry. ” “ Oh, yes, I know all about it, ” said Mrs. Trooper. “ Why, when is the wedding ? ” asked Mrs. Croupnick. “ As soon as she has completed her instruction and will become a Jewess. ” “ I dare say she will change her name, ” remarked Mrs. Sonnenstrahl. “ Certainly, her name is Constance Theresa, ” said Mrs. Croupnick. “ She will change it, I heard, for Deborah Leah. ”

“ What a pity, ” remarked Miss Brunin. “ She could have retained her name, it sounds so nice. ” “ What do you mean by a pity ? ” snapped Mrs. Goldstone. “ All my good friends I wish should have such names. Fancy to be ashamed of the Biblical names Deborah Leah. I can't see where the goieshka names Constance Theresa are nicer. ” “ Was not Deborah Moses' sister ? ” inquired Mrs. Drevosadski. “ You mistake it for Dinah, Joseph's sister, ” interrupted Mrs. Schifferblatt. “ I think Deborah was Moses' mother, ” was the opinion of Mrs. Paisterman. “ Is it not so ? ” she turned to Miss Brunin. “ According to the Bible, she was neither his sister nor his mother, ” answered Miss Brunin ; “ she was a prophetess. ” “ And who does not know about the four mothers, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah ? ” continued Mrs. Goldstone. “ But she watches to call her girls those names ! ” whispered Mrs. Phillips to Mrs. Reddish, referring to Mrs. Goldstone. “ There is Lucy, Viella, and Lalage. Have you ever heard of such names for Jewish girls ? I wonder what her mother says, who is supposed to be so from (religious) ? ” she finished with a grimace. Mrs. Reddish laughed.

Mr. Sonnenstrahl came in, accompanied by Mr. Hartman. They greeted the ladies cordially and joined the company. “ Is it true, ” began Mrs. Phillips, with regard to their former topic of conversation, “ that the shicksa is a Roman

Catholic ? ” “ Yes, so they say,” said our hostess. “ Excuse me, Mrs. Phillips, what do you mean by shicksa ? ” asked Mr. Hartman. “ Why, the same that you mean by shigetz,” remarked another lady, “ only the one is feminine and the other masculine.” “ Quite so,” agreed Mr. Hartman, “ but do you know what shaiketz means ? ” “ Well, I suppose a Yock, a non-Jew, and shicksa means a Gentile woman.”

“ Nothing of the kind,” said Mr. Hartman, “ it means pollution ; it means an unclean animal, a creeping beast, a reptile. This is also the meaning of shicksa.” “ Now I understand why their very touch pollutes the wine,” said one lady. “ Of course,” said another lady, “ when we call them by that name we do not go into details, we simply know that she can do things what we must not do.” “ However, to come back to our shicksa,” said Mrs. Phillips. “ I have heard that being a Roman Catholic she is more religious than a Protestant. It must be very hard for a Catholic to become a Jewess.” “ Well, just as hard as for a Jew to become a Roman Catholic,” remarked Mr. Hartman.

“ It must indeed be very strange for a Roman Catholic shicksa to plunge suddenly into a new religion,” said Mrs. Jacobson. “ It takes them a long time to grasp and still longer to forget their own ; and I am inclined to believe that in the long run she becomes so confused that she mixes up one with the other ; such as fasting with abstaining from meat on a Friday, offering candles to the church with our Yahrtzeit, and praying over candles, praying for the dead, and many similar things.”

“ You are quite right. I have known a woman who was a Yehudesta (a Christian who embraces Judaism) for twenty years, and on a Christmas Eve she mechanically laid the table, lit the candles, and wished a Merry Christmas.”

“ And I know one who was a Yehudesta for many years,” said Mrs. Froomberg, “ who told me confidentially that she feels sometimes that she ought to take the Holy Communion,

but she doesn't think anything wrong in making a Christmas pudding." "And another one told me," said Mrs. Croupnick, "whose husband did not treat her well, that she thought she had acted worse than Judas Ischariot, who had sold his master for thirty silver pieces; and that her husband was not worth even so much with all his Judaism." "What a cheek!" exclaimed Mrs. Phillips. "And so did I know one," said Mrs. Taitelbaum, "whose conscience used to prick her, which was, of course, quite natural. She thought that she had sold her birthright for a pot of pottage, of which the match was not worth the candle." "Well, I never!" exclaimed a lady. "And I also know one," said another lady, "who tried to deaden her conscience by consoling herself that after all Jesus himself was a Jew, and he might perhaps pardon her."

"Of course," said Mrs. Jacobson, "there are many Yehudestas who were only nominally Christians, and anything is good enough for them. I think that Jews can only be born, not made." "You are right," said Mrs. Froomberg; "the same Yehudesta whom I mentioned before keeps a strictly kosher house, and she is very serious about it; still, when she goes to her parents, she *does* eat trifah there, but when she returns home she drops a few coppers into the box, known as the 'Rabbi Meir Bal Nass' box, the proceeds of which go to the Holy Land, for those who dedicate their time to the study of the Holy Law and in whose merit we participate." "Oh, then she knows the trick," said Mrs. Phillips, and burst out laughing. "I can't see what there is to laugh at," remarked Mrs. Croupnick sternly. "A good thing it is that you can right little sins in that way; one cannot always be particular. I generally contribute towards such a holy cause, it makes me feel somehow safer."

"By the way," asked Mrs. Drevosadski, "what is Communion? I have often heard of it. Why should that

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Yehudesta long for it ? ” “ Oh, that is a kind of confession,” said Mrs. Phillips. “ I know that the Catholics confess. My shicksa, who is a Catholic, told me so.” “ Well, I don’t think that confession and Communion are the same thing,” was the opinion of Mrs. Trooper, “ but I am blessed if I know the difference. Fancy confessing sins, tell a stranger your secrets ; what a silly religion ! What do you think about it, Mr. Hartman ? ” “ Well, to be candid,” he answered, “ it is silly, but there again they have taken it from us ; as a matter of fact we, too, confess.” “ Do we really ? ” Many ladies were quite astonished. “ Yes,” he answered ; “ do we not say ‘ Viddoi ’ on our death-bed ? ” “ Why, is Viddoi a confession ? ” “ Well, did I not say that our religion is like theirs,” said Mrs. Sonnenstrahl. “ But,” said another lady, “ our confession must be a different one ; it cannot be the same.” “ I have heard a good story about a confession,” said Mr. Hartman. “ If the ladies wish, I will tell them about it.” “ Oh, yes, do,” they asked him. Mr. Hartman began.

“ A thief once went to confess. As he was kneeling in front of the priest he noticed a golden chain hanging down from the priest’s pocket. He could not resist the temptation, and with very practised fingers he deftly detached the chain and pulled out the watch attached to it. ‘ Confess, my son,’ encouraged the priest. ‘ Father, I am stealing,’ said the thief. ‘ Not so, my son. Say, “ I have stolen,” ’ corrected the good priest.

“ After having put the watch and chain into his pocket, the thief said again, ‘ Father, I have stolen.’ ‘ Return it to the person to whom it rightfully belongs,’ said the priest. The thief promptly produced the watch and chain, saying, ‘ Here it is, Father.’ ‘ Not to me,’ said the priest, smiling, ‘ but to the owner.’ ‘ The owner refuses to take it back,’ confessed the thief. ‘ Well, my son, if that is the case, then it is yours,’ said the priest. ‘ Thank you, Father,’—and

thus the thief was absolved and the priest relieved of his watch and chain."

"Oh, how delightful!" said the ladies. They enjoyed the joke. "There is one thing I noticed," said Mrs. Froomberg, "about the Yehudestas; they ask you such remarkable questions about Judaism, they seem to be so inquisitive." "Do you not know, ladies, that an artificial witch is worse than a real one," said Mr. Hartman. "Well, it seems to be the case here," laughed Mrs. Froomberg. "It seems with her that she does not wish to buy a cat in a sack, she wants to see what she is buying. She was having tea once at my place, and only listen to the questions she asked me.

"Why may she touch a candlestick on a Friday night before she lights the candles and not after? Also, why may she touch a candle or a match on a Sabbath when it is unburnt, but not after? Why the Jewish shopkeeper, like the grocer, milkman, etc., handles the goods on Sabbath and does not take the money for it at the same time? Why she must not pay on a Sabbath, but may do it through her child who carries the money for her? or why we may leave the money on a Friday and fetch the goods on a Saturday? Why she must not touch money on a Sabbath with the bare hand, but through an apron or glove she may? And why may she wear golden rings on her fingers, and yet must not touch a sovereign?" "What a silly question!" remarked a lady, "a golden sovereign is money." "Why," continued Mrs. Froomberg, "she must not carry a handkerchief in the pocket, but pinned on to the dress or round her hand?" "I know why," said a lady. "My father told me that when it is pinned on to the dress it becomes part of it." "Why you may use hot water boiled on a Friday, being kept hot all day Saturday by means of a continually kept fire, and not boil it on Sabbath straight away? Why Jewish women are bidden to wear shaitels

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(wigs) ? Since, she asked, the reason was to rob the woman of her natural beauty, why is she allowed to wear a wig made of nicer hair than her own, which makes her look ever so much prettier ? If washing the hands before taking food means cleanliness, why not use soap and a basin of water instead of having the water poured out of a particular jug over the closed fist, where the water does not even penetrate, which makes one always feel sorry for the state of the towels after the wiping of the hands ? ”

“ How stupid ! ” said Mrs. Phillips. “ Well ! Would a born Jewess ever ask such a stupid question ? ” “ Besides,” remarked another lady, “ it is not done for cleanliness, but in order to be able to say grace.”

Mrs. Froomberg continued further. “ Why a meat knife which was by mistake used for butter, should be placed in the ground and after some hours it can be used for meat again ? and ever so many more questions.

“ But, finally, she said to me that she cannot help noticing that Jewish women when they come together for a charitable or religious purpose never open the meeting with a prayer to ask for spiritual guidance.” “ Oh ! that is the limit ! ” exclaimed Mrs. Phillips, laughing aloud. “ How silly ! ” remarked another lady. “ How comes we to know to answer all these questions. We do the right thing instinctively. As if a Jewess has nothing else to do but to study the Law and know everything.” “ But these Yehudestas wish to know more than is good for them,” said Mrs. Froomberg. “ Once she asked me whether I know the reason why we Jews must not eat of the meat of the hindquarters of an animal, and thus we are deprived of the best part of it. Of course, I told her because it is forbidden, as it is trifah ; but she was not satisfied and asked me again, ‘ Why is it trifah ? ’ Because it is forbidden, I told her.” “ That’s right,” was the general remark of the

ladies. "But I asked her in my turn, 'Do you know the reason why?' Now listen to her reason why.

"When our Father Jacob was returning home with his family and riches, being afraid of his brother Esau he sent his family across the River Yabbok. Left alone he was confronted by an individual with whom he fought and wrestled the whole night." "Oh! it must have been a robber or one of those cut-throats of the wilderness," remarked Mrs. Phillips. "Or perhaps an angel," said Mr. Hartman. "I dare say one of your type," said Mrs. Phillips, laughing. "Anyhow," continued Mrs. Froemberg, "she told me that Father Jacob received a violent blow in the thigh, therefore the Children of Israel must not eat of the hind part of an animal." They all burst out laughing.

"What tommy rot she told you! What stupid nonsense! How ridiculous!" remarked Mrs. Phillips. "What has one to do with the other? Where did she find that silly tale?" "She told me that she read it in the English Bible." They all laughed again. "I thought so, she would not find such stupidity in our Bible, and I am sure that our enemies must have put it in their Bible in order to make fun and ridicule our religion."

"What is your opinion, Mr. Hartman?" asked Mrs. Phillips. "Well, I am glad to say," answered Mr. Hartman, "that it is true." "You mean to say that because Father Jacob received a blow in his thigh by a scoundrel who attacked him that we Jews are forbidden to eat of the hind part of the ox? Well, that is most comical." "And I call it ridiculous," said another lady. "Are you joking, Mr. Hartman?" "No, I am quite in earnest," answered that gentleman. "Yes, it is perfectly true," affirmed Mr. Sonnenstrahl. "And what will surprise you more, my dear ladies," added Mr. Hartman, "is that the robber and cut-throat, with whom it pleased you to identify me, was none other than a real angel.

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"As a matter of fact, it was God himself, and because of that blow on the thigh which Father Jacob received, we Jews are forbidden to eat that part of the animal, and what the Yehudesta told you that she read in the English Bible was but a translation of our Hebrew Bible (Genesis, chapter xxxii, verse 32)."

Mr. Sonnenstrahl affirmed the fact. "I told you," remarked Mrs. Phillips, "that these Yehudestras know much more than we do." "Yes, my ladies, because they read the Bible, and you do not," said Mr. Hartman. "Oh, yes, but she was a Christian before," remarked a lady; "that accounts for it." "I don't think she was exactly a Christian," said Mrs. Froomberg; "she called herself a Wesleyan." "I dare say some kind of a Christian," remarked another lady. "That, too, reminds me of some kind of a Christian," said Mr. Hartman, "but this time it was a Jew." "A Jew!" exclaimed several voices; "how is that?" "It happened in Moscow. In the 'eighties there was a Ukase for many Jews to leave Moscow. As is well known, many of our co-religionists who had been domiciled there for many years did not wish to leave all their possessions behind them, and also for many other reasons they resolved to get baptized, and with their certificates of baptism were permitted to remain.

"One of our new Christians was walking along the street when he was accosted by a Russian. 'Eh! thou dirty Jew, what art thou doing in Moscow?' The man stopped and answered quite indignantly, 'I ain't a Jew, I am a Christian.' 'A Christian!' The astonished man looked at the strongly pronounced Semitic features of the other, and said in an angry voice, 'You a Christian! How dare you make fun of me, thou Zsid (Jew)'? and doubled his fist to have a go at him. The Jew quickly pulled out a cross which he wore round his neck for safety's sake, held it up to the bully's nose and asked, 'What is this, a dog?'

A DISCUSSION ON RELIGIOUS TOPICS.

"The Muscovite crossed himself and said, 'God have mercy upon me! He is really a Christian! Let us shake hands, brother in Christ, and come, let us have a drink.'"

"I must say that I don't believe in changing one's religion," said Mrs. Drevosadski. "Of course, if a Christian becomes a Jew, it is to his benefit, but I personally would not like that my child should marry a shicksa or yock. I don't believe in mixed marriages; it is impossible they should understand our religion, they must be brought up in it."

"And they cannot have Jewish hearts," said Mrs. Paisterman. "They can only change their religion, but not their nature. A goieshka heart remains a goieshka heart."

"And my convictions are, if a Christian becomes a Jew," said Mrs. Phillips, "even a good Jew, he is still a Christian, and in his very heart he hates us."

CHAPTER TWENTY.

How the Ladies are Cured by Charms.

MR. AND MRS. JACOBS are having a soirée at their house in order to celebrate the happy recovery of Mrs. Jacobs from a very grave and serious illness. Relatives and friends all came in large numbers, as the Jacobs' are charming people and very well liked. They are known to be the happiest couple in the world, for theirs was a real love match. Although their parents did not agree to the match, on account of an old feud, for they belonged to different religious sects (the first were Chassidim, the followers of a certain Rabbi, and the others were more advanced in their views), in spite of the opposition the couple managed to be united and thus became the means

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of reconciliation between the parties, and peace was established between their respective parents for ever.

The cause of the rejoicing, as above-mentioned, is true so far as the outsider is concerned ; but there was another reason for this special event, of course not known to their friends, but only to themselves, which we shall now relate. And since we are not giving the real names of our host and hostess, we trust that we will not be considered guilty of indiscretion. Nine months after the marriage of Mr. and Mrs. Jacobs, which happened about two years ago, Mrs. Jacobs was awaiting the happy event of becoming a mother. One morning, as the time was drawing near, Mr. Jacobs called a doctor to see his wife. The poor young woman was now having a terrible time ; for three days and three nights she was in agonizing pains, and she could not give birth to the child.

Here was a most terrible problem to solve—either the mother's or child's life had to be sacrificed. The child finally had to be taken with instruments while the mother was under chloroform. The child was born dead, and the mother, if she could pass the crisis, might be saved. She was in a very critical condition, and medical skill had reached that point when it could not go farther. The case must be left to chance. The doctor found the temperature very high, when the husband asked, in a hollow voice : " Doctor, is there any hope ? " " Well," answered the doctor, " the crisis is not yet over. Still, there is hope ; we must trust in God and hope for the best."

During the evening the crisis was not yet over, and early in the morning the doctor called again. The husband, who was very exhausted and tired from watching all night under this terrible suspense, was very much run down. He looked at the doctor. " Any hope ? " was all he could utter in a husky voice. " Well," answered the doctor, " so long as there is life there is hope." In the afternoon

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he found her state decidedly in her favour. Only after the third day the doctor could at last congratulate the overjoyed husband ; she was safe.

Mrs. Jacobs, in her pain and delirium, turned terribly against her husband, calling him " Monster," and accusing him of being the cause of all her suffering, and saying that he had brought all the misery upon her and was the cause of her agonies, and that he was killing her as he killed the baby, and so on.

In her delirium she had developed a hatred and bitterness towards her husband which cut to his very heart, and he felt, with great grief, with the return of her senses that his wife's affection for him was lost. She simply could not bear the look of him, and he deemed it advisable to make his presence felt as little as possible. Only when she was asleep could the broken-hearted man tip-toe into the room, where, from a shielded corner, he could watch his wife's thin, pale, and haggard face, a mere shadow of her former self.

One day Mrs. Jacobs called her nurse, and said to her : " I have formed a resolution. I have made up my mind, should I ever recover, that never will I live with my husband again. I will never have anything to do with him; I will not, nurse. So may God send me a speedy recovery. I have determined and resolved to do it ; and to make it irrevocable I will swear. Please, nurse," she urged, " bring in my husband's bag with the Tephillin (Phylacteries)." The nurse was hesitating a little, but dared not refuse or contradict her patient. The young woman took hold of the bag containing the Phylacteries, and swore by them. " I will never, never have anything to do with my husband, and so help me God, Amen."

So time wore on, and Mrs. Jacobs, under the care of two nurses and the doctor in daily attendance, made excellent progress, so that after three months she practically

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recovered, though her health was still in a delicate state. She was ordered to the seaside, where she recuperated wonderfully. Having returned home, she remained true to the promise which she had made on that memorable day, and arranged for a separate bedroom. Whilst Mrs. Jacobs had fully recovered and looked herself again, her husband, on the contrary, looked older, careworn, and dejected.

His joviality and cheerfulness were gone, his brightness a thing of the past. He, too, had passed through a terrible time during his wife's illness, but his prospects for the future looked very gloomy indeed. His wife was not blind to the fact; she knew that she was the cause of it, and she felt extremely sorry for him, but it was beyond her power to help him. It was a great misfortune for both of them, but there was no escape. Poor woman, she thought of her vow, and she was convinced, should she break it, that Almighty God would bring on her, and, perhaps, on her husband, still greater calamities than that she had passed through.

She was now more concerned for her husband than herself, as she could see that he suffered, and was sinking fast. She could not hide the fact that she was the cause of it. She had remorse, and reproached herself bitterly, as it cut her deeply to see her husband suffer. She knew that her husband loved her; but he could not love her as much as she loved him, of that she was convinced. As time wore on, Mrs. Jacobs gradually regained her cheerfulness, and became brighter, and, to the delight of her husband, she became as charming as ever; but not as a wife, only a dear, delightful companion, a friend and devoted consort. It happened one day, whither by chance, perhaps, he skilfully led the conversation most delicately, that he touched upon the point concerning the present state of their matrimonial life.

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"My dear wife," he said; "what are your intentions? Have you forgotten your marriage vows? What about your duties? Do you realize, my dear Laura, where we are drifting to? What is your aim and purpose in your extraordinary and strange behaviour towards me?" He noticed that this conversation produced a very painful impression upon her. She was sad, and muttered something about a terrible vow with terrible consequences; that, although she fully realized the position, unfortunately she could not alter it. When he understood more or less the meaning of her words, he tried in a jocular way to make the matter easy. "As for that, my dear, I will absolve you. I have the power to free you of all vows," he said, laughingly. But, instead of convincing her, he noticed that the more he spoke about it, the more it seemed to make her feel uncomfortable.

She turned pale and seemed to suffer mental agony; so, for her sake, he dropped the subject and thought to leave matters to time, which heals all wounds.

It happened one afternoon that the nurse paid them a visit, and was invited to stay for tea. The nurse complimented her on her marvellous improvement, and added, "I am sure you have now every reason to be happy." "Yes," answered Mrs. Jacobs, "I have every cause to be glad of my improvement, but as for being happy, I am far from it," and she looked at her husband. The nurse, for the first time, observed that Mr. Jacobs had changed in appearance. "Yes," she said, again, "I could be happy," and she sighed deeply, "but there it is!" Mr. Jacobs looked at his wife. "Yes, nurse, there is a skeleton in our cupboard, a terrible curse weighs on my conscience. You, nurse, know all about it." "I!" asked the nurse, in surprise, "I know the cause of your unhappiness?"

"Yes, nurse, you remember that memorable day when I made a terrible vow; I swore it in your presence." The

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nurse burst out laughing. "You mean on the phylacteries?" "Yes," said Mrs. Jacobs. "Now, let me tell you the truth," said the nurse. "It was not the phylacteries that were in the bag, but potatoes which I put in. You swore by the *pommes de terre*. You made a vow to the potatoes! The phylacteries I had removed, knowing at that time that what you were asking of me you would repent of later on. So I played you a potato trick."

Mrs. Jacobs fell on the nurse, embraced and kissed her, laughing with tears for joy. "My dear nurse, you are an angel. Have you an idea what I owe you for this trick? All my happiness." Husband and wife fell into each other's arms, and thus were they united once more.

On the following day they went for their second honeymoon.

To-night they are celebrating practically their re-marriage, of which the company were all unaware. "How wonderfully Mrs. Jacobs has improved since her illness," remarked Mrs. Phillips. "We all thought at that time that she would never get over it." "Yes, it was terrible," affirmed Mrs. Goldstone; "they said that if it were not for the specialist, she might have died together with the child." The ladies shuddered.

"I know of a similar case," said Mr. Hartman, who was one of the party. "It happened that a woman was going to give birth to a child, but she expired before the birth of the infant. In such circumstances, with us Jews, she must not be buried with the yet unborn child. She must be relieved of it, and many are the methods adopted to achieve the purpose. They can be divided into two methods—namely, persuasion and force.

"The first is comical, while the latter is repulsive. After the usual customary habit amongst us Jews, we ask the corpse 'Mechilah'—that is, that it should forgive us for any wrong done to it—and, at the same time, we beg

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of it to intervene and pray to God on our behalf. This done, some of the family most concerned in the affair address themselves to the corpse just as if she were alive. They speak to it first in a most soothing and coaxing manner, asking it most kindly to give up the child. They make all sorts of promises, and then they reason with it, and if she still remains obstinate, they implore, beseech, and beg of her. They try to soften her heart in that way, and if this manœuvring is of no avail, then the second method, force, is applied, which process we shall not describe in detail, as we wish to spare your better feelings.

“As it happened, in this particular case, the corpse was absolutely deaf to all entreaties and persuasions. She absolutely resolved to retain the child of which she seemed to be so fond. In their great perplexity they resolved to send for the Rabbi of the town; perhaps his authority and great wisdom would break the stubbornness of the corpse. The Rabbi entered with great dignity and addressed himself most suavely to the dead body. But in vain; she showed no respect for him, she was silent. Finally, he became severe in his demeanour, spoke more authoritatively and demanded that the child should be given up at once; but, of course, he was ignored.

“The Rabbi adopted a most threatening manner, took out from his bosom the Shofar (ram’s horn)”—the women shuddered—“and held it before the corpse. This Shofar, as we know, possesses great powers; it is used on the fearful days and the great White Fast, the day of Atonement. Its very sounds produce angels, which carry the prayers of the congregation to the Throne of God. It possesses the power to change God’s determination. As we have it in our prayer books and in the Talmud, ‘At the hour when Israel takes the ram’s horn and sounds it before the Holy One, blessed be His Name, He rises from the throne of judgment and sits on the throne of mercy.’

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This terrible instrument is a most powerful weapon in the hands of our Rabbies. With it they excommunicate the transgressor, not only in this world, but also in the world to come. So," continued Mr. Hartman, "the Rabbi held the Shofar in his hands, trembling, and demanded the deliverance of the child, or he would adopt the extreme measure, for the consequences of which she alone would be to blame."

"Well, did she obey?" asked some of the ladies. "No!" answered Mr. Hartman, "she did not." "Why?" asked several voices, very much moved. "Because—because—" he said, slowly, "because she was d-e-a-d . . . dead."

"Dead! dead!" repeated several ladies, as if they were repeating a prayer. "And so she was," affirmed Mr. Hartman.

"You know Mrs. Lilienthal?" said Mrs. Cursman. "She was confided with twins. She, too, had a shocking time." "What was the matter with her?" asked Mrs. Drevosadski. "The babies were crossing one another, and they had to have two specialists, and they took it from her."

"I know a good remedy for hard child-birth," said Mrs. Goldstone. "What is it?" asked several young women, interested at once. "Well," said Mrs. Goldstone, "take the woman by the hand, and walk with her round a table seven times; it acts like a miracle!" "I also heard of that remedy," said Mrs. Drevosadski, "but the woman must crawl on her hands and knees round the table seven times to the right, and seven times to the left—they say it acts like a charm, better and quicker than instruments."

"Talking about curing by remedies," said Mrs. Shwatz again, "I know of a woman who had a bad breast. An old woman told her to find a big spider and put it in an

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empty nut-shell, stick it together and put it in a linen bag, and hang it round the neck; and that would take the swelling off. After that, she told her to find a door with an old-fashioned long iron handle, and turn the breast round it seven times, and then rub it in with Passover fat, and put a red flannel round it."

"Yes," said Mrs. Cursman, "Mrs. Shwatz is right, by my blessed life. Those old women are very clever; they knows of remedies that no doctor would think of."

"I daresay they would not," remarked Mr. Hartman, quite seriously. "Well," further said Mrs. Cursman, "I heard of a remedy that an old shepherd told my mother." "What is it?" asked Mrs. Shwatz, highly interested. "Well, that is a remedy for when a woman suffers with her inside. You must get up before daybreak, go to the forest, and collect ants. Cook them in water in which twenty-one big nails were soaking for twenty-one hours, filter them, and drink it, half with kosher wine, every morning a small glass. That is the finest thing, and cures the inside properly."

The ladies were highly interested. "Mrs. Cursman, what do you mean by the inside?" asked Miss Freedman, "the stomach, lungs and liver?" "What a ridiculous question to ask," answered Mrs. Cursman, amused. "An inside is an inside, and which woman hasn't got an inside? Besides, it is good for everything."

"Yes, I must admit," said Mrs. Drevosadski, "I do believe in some remedies. Of course, I am not so ignorant as to believe in everything. I suffer sometimes with my throat. I have my family doctor to attend to it, but I always put a black woollen stocking round my neck, turned inside out, and begin from the left side to the right."

"That just reminds me," said Mrs. Cursman, "about nose bleedings. My grandmother, God rest her soul, used to have it, and she used to draw her blood with leeches,

they used to do her good." "Yes," said Mrs. Shwatz, "them things are really good for you."

"You don't mean to eat them?" asked Joe Myers. "Oh, bless my heart, Joe," Mrs. Shwatz burst out laughing. "Eat them? No! To have the blood drawn off." "That just reminds me of that Russian peasant," said Joe.

"Oh, please let us hear it," several ladies asked. "A peasant was taken ill," Joe commenced, "and after having offered three tallow candles to his patron saint, which did not help him to get better, they decided to call a doctor. So his wife sent for one in a neighbouring town. The doctor called and found by examination that the illness was not a serious one, and, knowing better what could help the peasant, ordered him to have leeches twice daily. A few days later the doctor called again, and found the peasant quite well. 'Well, Peter,' asked the doctor, 'did you have the leeches as I ordered you?' 'Yes,' answered Peter, 'twice daily; and jolly nice they are,' he added. The doctor was a bit puzzled by the reply, and asked him, 'How did you have them?'

"'Oh,'" said Peter, 'my wife, Avdotia Pavlovna, prepared them for me; you leave it to her. She is a good cook!' The doctor looked strangely at the peasant, who seemed quite pleased with himself. 'Where is your wife?' he asked. 'In the kitchen,' answered the peasant. When the doctor entered the kitchen, he found the good woman in front of a fire, on which was a frying pan containing heaps of leeches swimming about in a goodly quantity of fat.

"Some were still half alive, and the unfortunate leeches were twisting about and doubling themselves up, swelling, and ejaculating painful sounds, until finally they quietened down and sank to the bottom of the pan, when they were declared ready for Peter's supper. When she perceived the doctor she was delighted, and told him how her husband liked them, and she thanked him for his remedy! 'It did

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do him a lot of good,' she assured the doctor. The doctor made no further comments."

The company burst out laughing.

"Anyway," said Mrs. Phillips, "he did not seem to have suffered from indigestion."

"I have heard of a similar case of a mistaken prescription," said Mr. Hartman. The company were eager to hear it. Mr. Hartman began :

"A peasant thought that he was suffering from rheumatism, and, after having consulted all the old women and shepherds in the neighbourhood, he decided to call a doctor, which was done. The doctor examined the man and told the peasant's wife to call at his surgery, when he gave her a bottle, containing spirits, and said, 'Tell your husband to rub himself in with this bottle three times daily.'

"A few days later the doctor called, and found the peasant much better than he expected. 'Well, Thomas,' asked the doctor, 'has the bottle which I sent you done you good?' 'Thank you, sir,' replied Thomas; 'I used it exactly as you ordered me to do, and it was marvellous.' The doctor looked a bit surprised. 'Why! how did you use it?' he asked. 'Oh!' said Thomas, quite cheerfully, 'I drank the spirit and rubbed myself in with the bottle three times daily, as my wife told me were your orders.'

"The doctor laughed heartily, in which our good peasant joined in, then the doctor said, 'Well, Thomas, all is well that ends well.'"

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE.

How the Ladies of the Ghetto began to eat Chazon (Pork) and Why.

THE conversation at the tea-table was naturally very lively, the topic was very interesting, the ladies were exchanging opinions on their favourite theme, viz., their various complaints, doctors, their ways with the patients, comparing them, praising them, or finding fault with them, as the occasion demanded.

"How do you feel now, Mrs. Drevosadski?" inquired Mrs. Phillips. "Thank you, mustn't grumble," answered that lady. "What was the matter with you?" inquired Mrs. Shwatz. "I had aggravation, which caused indigestion," replied Mrs. Drevosadski, "but I am much better, thank God." "What did you do?" inquired Mrs. Shwatz. "I was attending Doctor W——.; he is so patient, he listens to you. I feel quite at home with him, but as I did not feel better I went to a big physician. He didn't give any time at all; you have to tell him in a few words how you feel. Why, the whole business takes fifteen minutes, and look how much you pay for it!"

"Well, Mrs. Drevosadski," remarked Miss Freedman, "these gentlemen have no time to spare; they see you by appointment. If they should listen to all our tales, it will take away the best part of the day." "You know, Miss Freedman," said Joe, "that this reminds me of that famous doctor, Abernethy, of St. Bartholomew's. He was a man of very few words, short and to the point. Once a lady called upon him and told him that she has a dozen

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complaints to-day, of which she is going to tell him. 'How long will it take you to enumerate them?' asked the doctor. 'Half an hour,' said the lady. 'Well, Madam, whilst you recite the various complaints, I will visit a patient not far from here.'" The ladies were smiling, but Mrs. Drevosadski was displeased. "But how can you, when you go to a doctor? You must tell him everything; sometimes every limb ached you, and you can't tell the particular place." "You are right," affirmed Mrs. Cursman.

"Well, ladies, I dare say you have heard of that woman?" Mr. Hartman said. "Which woman?" asked several voices. "A Jewess came once to a doctor and told him that there is something wrong with her. 'What is it?' asked the doctor. She told him that she had pains in her head; when she coughed it affected her chest; she suffered with noises in her ears, and, of course, her eternal indigestion was an old trouble. She had continually to take liver pills, and no sooner did it rain, she felt it in all her body; her rheumatism woke up. 'My nerves,' she continued, 'are in a shocking bad state, and, doctor, I myself am also not well.'" The ladies could not help laughing at this. "What did the specialist advise you?" inquired Mrs. Phillips of Mrs. Drevosadski. "He told me I must have rest, and described me a special diet, what food I shall eat, a lot of fat; amongst others he ordered me to have bacon." Mihma Esther and Mrs. Shipeski spat out when they heard this, and some of the ladies shuddered, but waited for an explanation.

"He said," she proceeded, "that it will strengthen my heart, which is affected. Of course, I can assure my audience that I was not pleased with the idea of having bacon, and I asked the doctor, 'Doctor,' I says, 'are you quite sure that I must eat bacon? You know what that means to me? Can I not get better without it?' He is a clever man, and understood me. He said, 'Well,

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madam, if you wish to get better, then you must have it. So you will understand me.' Well, if such a great big doctor orders it, and if one wishes to get well, you must do it."

"You are right, said Mrs. Goldstone, "I had the same case. I went to see Sir S. N——, and he pointed out to my husband that I must have bacon to improve my nerves. Of course, my poor mother carried on alarmingly, but health comes first, and my husband insisted I should have it. I procured special utensils for it." "Certainly, so did I," assured them Mrs. Drevosadski. "Oh, yes," said Miss Freedman, "I know of a good many Jews who eat pork by the doctor's special orders."

"Which reminds me of that Russian doctor," said Mr. Hartman. "In one of the towns in Russia there was a young doctor, a very clever man. He was a beginner, and counted his patients one on each finger. Once he was visited by a very rich Jewess, who declared that she was anæmic. Amongst other things he ordered her bacon. She very reluctantly took to it, but she found, subsequently, that it did her a great deal of good. Of course, you know our ladies, without offending them, that they are fond of relating their illnesses to one another"—the ladies laughed at this—"and so did that lady. Of course, exaggerating a bit, I dare say, telling them that she was dying or getting into consumption, and praising the doctor, and saying he was her saviour, and so on. The ladies, of course, wished to know his whereabouts, and the doctor found himself suddenly with a goodly number of patients, consisting chiefly of our co-religionists, who told him that they were recommended by Mrs. So-and-so, and by their genteel hints, he smelt the rat; in short, he recommended them all to have chazor. After that many more flocked to him, and the man became famous, and retired in a short time a rich man."

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"Oh, Mr. Hartman, don't exaggerate, please," said Mrs. Drevosadski, in an angry tone. "Which Jew likes to eat bacon purposely? I assure you that I was so innocent about that, that I even didn't know how to cook it. I boiled it in oil the first time on a big light, and the smell was so bad that I had to run out of the room." "I should think so," laughed Mrs. Goldstone, "fancy bacon in oil!" "And I know numberless Jewish people," remarked Miss Freedman, "who, after having had pork by the doctor's orders, get so used to it that when they get well again they cannot do without it, as it acts on them like a kind of a drug. They go to the doctor and ask him whether it will do them any harm if they continue with it. The doctor tells them, 'By all means, if you think it does you good, then you should keep on with it,' and thus they have got used to eating pork."

"I should like to know," said Mrs. Phillips, a bit hotly, "are you quite sure that we don't eat trifah indirect? Suppose we go to a restaurant or even a teashop, you are not quite certain whether the crockery and cutlery, milk and meat ones, are not mixed and washed up together."

"Well, Mrs. Phillips," said Joe, "when we go to a restaurant which has Kosher marked on the windows, we have to trust that all and everything is the same; again, if we do not find that sign on the window, we cannot expect otherwise." "Well, yes," said Miss Freedman, "something similar happened to my friend, Rebecca Elfenbein. She is a strictly religious girl, and would not dream of eating pork, whether she is ill or not. Once she was at one of the tea-houses of a well-known Jewish firm, and she was having some pastries.

"She passed some remarks to the waitress that the pastries were very nice. 'Oh, yes, madam, it ought to be good; it is made of the very best lard,' assured her the waitress unwittingly. You can imagine what that poor

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girl felt." "I can quite understand," sympathized Mrs Shipeski, shaking her head, "nebech!"

"This reminds me of a girl," remarked Joe. "It happened at a dance. There was a very mixed company, and towards the end of the dance the party were getting rather tired. One young lady, who happened to be a Jewess, felt very tired and sleepy, and, forgetting herself, yawned. Near by was a young man, evidently a Gentile. 'Oh, Miss,' he said to her, 'you open your mouth as if you wish to swallow me up.' 'Excuse me, sir,' the girl answered politely, 'I am a Jewess, and we are forbidden to eat swine's meat.'" The whole company burst out laughing.

"Well," said Mrs. Shnabelowopski, "but sometimes you can't help it, especially when you are ill. When my husband was ill (it shouldn't happen again!), the great physician doctor told him that he was suffering with sugar debitis, and that he must have ham, which is also a kind of bacon. I think it is of the same swine. Of course, does a Jew like to eat chazor (pork)? But for health, what don't you do?" "You are quite right there, madam," said Mr. Hartman, "as I have heard of a similar case which happened in Poland.

"There lived a woman near Warsaw who was becoming consumptive. Her husband went with her to a Rabbi, and the Rabbi advised them to consult a doctor. The doctor told the husband that his wife was wasting, and she must eat chazor or die. The husband was a Chassid, and naturally was very upset about it. They went again to the Rabbi, and told him of their troubles, and asked for advice. The Rabbi looked very serious. He looked at the woman, she was very pale, thin, and ill-looking, more like dead, and finally said, 'Well, for Pekeach Nefesh (when life is endangered) you may break even the Sabbath day. It is for health, and, therefore, if the doctor is of

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the opinion that the chazor will save her life, I give permission for it until she recovers.' And so the woman began to eat chazor.

"Once a friend of hers asked, 'Shprinka, how can you eat chazor, are you not feeling sick?' Shprinka smacked her lips, and said, 'Don't ask me such a question. Long live the Rabbi; I am blessing him every day. Why! I have a pleasure, and I have no sin at the same time.'" The company burst out laughing again.

"Well, Mr. Hartman, you may joke as much as you like, but I find that it has done me good," said Mrs. Drevo-sadski. "Of course, he also told me to have rest and not to worry too much, not to brood, and to be lively. Well, I ask you, how can you manage it? In the house there is always worry, what with the husband, the children, and the shicksas. It is quite enough; if you turn away your attention for a moment, the whole house is topsy-turvy." All the ladies agreed with her.

"For instance, my piano in my drawing-room is an expensive instrument; I have it polished once a month. Yesterday I went in the room and found the dust on the piano two inches thick. I assure you, you can imagine how I felt. What is the good of spending the money on doctors?"

"Well, Mrs. Drevosadski, that just reminds me of a certain gentleman," said Joe. "Who?" several ladies asked. "A gentleman paid a visit to a friend's house, and found the lady of the house was out. He was shown into the drawing-room, and was told by the maid that her mistress would not be long. He waited, and, to pass the time away, had a look round the room. He noticed a nice layer of dust on the piano, and wrote with his finger the word 'Swine' on it. After having waited some time, and the lady not yet returning, he left the house. A few days afterwards he met the lady and told her that he was

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very sorry, he had called, waited, and had to leave without having seen her. 'Oh! I knew you were there,' she said with a charming smile, 'I found your card on the piano.' 'The whole company were laughing and really enjoying the little anecdote.

"Well," sighed Mrs. Drevosadski, "I wish I could take it so easy as that lady, but I am so particular. My husband says I should go out more, but it is not always convenient, and, besides, it does not always amuse you." "As for that, Mrs. Drevosadski, you will permit me to tell you to take the advice of a certain Rabbi." The ladies were smiling, expecting some fun, and Mr. Hartman began:

"In Lithuania, in a certain town, there lived a very clever Rabbi, who, although very pious, was not blessed with earthly riches, but with seven daughters, not spring chickens, and single into the bargain. Once the Rabbetzin said to the Rabbi, 'What will be the final purpose with the girls; they are sitting at home, with no diversion whatever. Surely, we must see that they should go out more, and have some enjoyment, something to brighten them up.' The Rabbi said, 'You are right, my wife. I know there is nothing better to brighten you up than a good, hearty laugh; but why need they go out for it elsewhere and spend money on amusements which may not brighten them up at all, or only temporarily. Besides, you cannot always go out. They can have it at home easier, and at any time. Let them all sit down in a circle, and tickle one another. I am sure that this will make them laugh, and, at the same time, it is a good and cheap entertainment.' " The whole company were laughing again, and thoroughly enjoyed the joke.

"My mother, bless her, was a great believer in Rabbies," said another lady. "She was somehow always suffering with the evil eye. I remember once she had one of her

attacks, and the doctor whom my father called in said it was indigestion, but my mother would not have it. She sent me to her favourite Rabbi to have the evil eye charmed away. She gave me a handkerchief, which had been previously tied round her head. The Rabbi whispered something over it, and after putting it into a piece of blue paper, on which were written some mysterious letters, he breathed into the handkerchief and cautioned me not to speak in the street until I reached home, in order that his breath should reach my mother intact.

"I left the Rabbi's place with the best intentions not to utter a sound, and begged of my friend who was with me not to tempt me by speaking to me. I braved it for some time, and then I perceived a friend of mine at some distance whom I had not seen for some time, and exclaimed quite excitedly, 'Oh, look! there is D——,' but immediately after I thought of the broken silence, and I felt quite alarmed.

"My friend promised faithfully not to tell. I handed the parcel over to my mother, and she placed it on her head, and she felt quite happy. I was silently watching to see whether my speaking in the street had a bad effect upon my mother, but I was glad to hear her say that she was feeling already better. After that I had my doubts about charming away the evil eye."

"Yes, so did my mother tell us a nice story about a Rabbi," said Miss Freedman. "When my eldest sister was a baby, she was taken ill once. Of course, my mother's first action was to go to the Rabbi. She was not admitted immediately to his presence, as he was busy. She happened to sit down near a door, and could not help overhearing a quarrel between the Rabbi and Rabbetzin. 'Our Sarah is very ill,' she said, 'we must do something.' 'Don't worry,' answered the Rabbi in a soothing tone; 'she will be all right. I will pray for her, and God will help.'

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'This you can tell to your dupes who come to you,' answered the wife, 'but for my child I will have a doctor, fresh air, and proper nourishment.'

"This time my mother listened to the Rabbetzin, not to the Rabbi. She went home and acted accordingly." They were all laughing.

Mrs. Shipeski was of the same opinion. "It reminds me, Miss Freedman," Mrs. Shwatz said, "what you say that it is good to have proper food. When I be confinded with mine Chaila (should live!) I suffered with mine woman (womb). The midwife (a cholera be on her!), didn't bind me up well, and I am bad all these blessed years, and I was intending the expensary in Leman Street. They gave me the best medicine, what you couldn't get better if you paid for it, and I was getting on grand, I tell you. After that I got the infulenza and ammonia on the lungs shocking bad. My husband insulted a big physician doctor—them toffs who don't take less than five guineas and stays ten minutes.

"He examined me and also mine woman, and told me that I must have a reparation. Oi, you can think what I felt when I heard it. It got dark in mine eyes. All mine enemies should have a reparation, but not me! A woman told me that the missionaries got a shocking good doctor, but you must first listen to their prayers and preaching about their Yoisel (Jesus)—a black year on them, mine illness also!"

Mihma Esther spat out.

"Not that I can't afford to pay, but they told me that he was a good doctor. You shouldn't never know him! I put on my shabbiest clothes not to look different from the other women, and I went. He examined me shocking good, every bone separately; it was worth ten pounds. He was so patient, I told him the story from the beginning. He asked me as how was mine appetite. I told him very

bad, that all Meshumodims (apostates) should have such an appetite. Some of the ladies laughed at this. "Yes, I forgot mineself." Mrs. Shwatz also laughed. "And do you think he was angry? Not him. He smiled and said, 'Poor Meshumodim, I am also one of them!' Then, when I told him about the reparation, he said, 'What reparation? What you need is plenty of fresh hair and good irishment (nourishment).' Well, I went to Bath, and there, thank God, it made a woman of me; all good Jews should be so well!"

"When I was under the knife," began Mrs. Drevosadski, "I remember, before I was operated on the 'pails,' I also went to the Missionary doctor. He advised me the same what the West End physician. You must admit he is a very clever man, but what's the use of it when he is a Meshumod?" "I can't believe it," interrupted Mrs. Shwatz. "He couldn't have said you must have a reparation. Why didn't he advise me to have it? It couldn't have been the same doctor." "Allow me to differ," said Mrs. Drevosadski, "it was the same doctor; but your complaint was different than mine. I assure you he did advise me to have it operated."

Mrs. Shwatz still looked puzzled. "It is true," explained Mrs. Drevosadski; "perhaps he would not insist on an operation, but I went with my husband, and I dare say I must have been serious, because he said several times to my husband after he examined me, 'I don't like the state of your wife's health; no, I don't like her at all'; and he shook his head." "Excuse me, madam," interrupted Mr. Hartman, "I do not wish to be personal, but it reminds me of a similar expression. A woman was taken ill; her husband called the doctor. After carefully examining her, he looked serious.

"He prescribed a medicine. When the husband was seeing the doctor out, he asked him what was the matter

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with his wife. 'I am not quite sure of it yet, but I don't like the symptoms at all,' he said. 'No,' he added, 'I don't like her at all.' 'Oh, doctor,' said the husband, 'you only found it out to-day? I don't like her for the last twenty years.' " They all burst out laughing at this.

"So it was when he examined me," said Mrs. Shwatz. "He measured my temperament with them trometers." "You mean term'meter," corrected Mrs. Drevosadski, smilingly. "Yes, them trometers, them glass things what you hold in your mouth. Of course, you mustn't talk; if not, the heat goes out." "I am sure, Mrs. Shwatz, it is trying to have to keep quiet," remarked Joe, laughing.

"I remember when I was ill and was very low down in the dumps—I must have had a very high temperature—the doctor told me a fine joke which did make me laugh." "What is it?" asked the ladies.

"A doctor visited a lady patient who was not quite well. He put the thermometer into her mouth, and after a while examined it, and seemed not to be satisfied, and put it back into her mouth. The husband was watching these proceedings with great interest. In the next room he settled the doctor's fees, and asked him whether he could sell him the thermometer. 'Willingly,' the doctor said, and handed it to the husband. The doctor was highly surprised to find that the husband gave him a fiver for it. 'Well, doctor,' said the husband, 'it is well worth that to me, for this is the only remedy I have ever known to keep my wife quiet for fully five minutes.' " "What a shame!" the ladies were laughing aloud. "Wicked man!" they said.

"When I had mine last illness," remarked Mrs. Shnabelowopski, "I was shocking bad. We couldn't get no nurse nowhere, so I had to be nursed by my shicksa, a bad year on her! She didn't understand nothing; she did every-

thing upside down. You had to tell her seven times one word and then she forgot half of it."

"Yes," said Mr. Hartman, "it is a blessing to have servants who understand you half way, as I have heard a good story about it.

"A gentleman who was known to be hard to please advertised for a servant. He had many applicants, but they would not do, because he expected that when he told them one word they would understand seven. At last this Napoleon met his Waterloo. A man called who said that he was equal to the demand. One day his master was indisposed, and ordered the servant to call a doctor. The servant obeyed promptly. After having been absent a good while, he returned. 'What was the delay?' inquired the master, angrily. 'Well, sir,' answered the servant quite coolly, 'I acted according to our agreement. I understood seven words from one. I went for the doctor, clergyman, undertaker, ordered the coffin, chose the burial ground, wreath, and tombstone . . . and here is the bill!'"

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO.

Miss Brunin is Considering—But May Decide.

A FEW days after the last-described visit to Mrs. Jacobs, when Miss Brunin entered her house Miss Lehrer handed her a letter. She opened it and glanced over the contents, then she said, "It is an invitation from Mihma Esther to attend an important meeting next week."

"I wonder what may be the purpose of that meeting? Mihma Esther is not in the habit of having social gatherings at her place. I dare say we will meet the élite again." "I

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do not intend to go," said Miss Lehrer. "Why?" asked Miss Brunin. "To tell you the truth," said her cousin, "it is because I detest them; I think I could apply my time to something better." "My dear girl," said Miss Brunin, "and do you think that I like them, the upstarts, these empty-headed gossip-mongers? But somehow they begin to amuse me rather, because they are a great study to me. It is true that at the beginning I took them more seriously, but when one gets to know them better, one does not know whether to pity them or to regard them as an entertainment." "I do not see where one can be amused by them," said Miss Lehrer, who seemed displeased. "After all, they have nothing to say; and how trying it is to listen to their everlasting bragging about their shicksas, food, kids, blackmailing one another in their absence, criticizing their friends in a most vulgar way, again being criticized in turn, to listen to their illnesses, their doctors, or to hear all about their new houses, expensive furniture, motor-cars, with which they vie with each other, the same thing over again; and none of them has a good word to say about the other."

"But, Rose, what do you expect of them?" asked Miss Brunin. "You must not forget that these people, although very rich now, are of a very low extraction, the most of them cannot even sign their names except by putting an X, and those who do know are not less vulgar and arrogant. They are full of superstition and gross ignorance, and have a lot of malice in them. Why, they cannot even grasp the rudiments of honour, nor have they an idea of what self-respect means. They are, after all, an ignorant lot, and as such you have to take them. Their idea of God is nothing but a bogey-man to them.

"And their religion—it consists of fear of mixing the wrong fork with the wrong spoon, the wrong knife with the wrong plate, which taken altogether with kosher and trifah,

meat and milk, makes up a religion of the stomach. Beyond this, they cannot venture." "All this is quite true," Miss Lehrer agreed. "They have not a spark of spirituality amongst themselves."

"My dear girl," said Miss Brunin, "these upstarts cannot be blamed, for all that; they have not had an opportunity to attend any school, as most of them were felling hands, button-hole makers, cigarette makers, sempstresses, sleeve hands, or some other factory hand. Some again who came over to England when very young and were compelled to go to school were brought up in the slums, surrounded by pestilential atmosphere, and what they ever acquired in school besides reading and writing has been destroyed by their 'bewigged' mothers with their rich vocabulary of cursing, which they can render into English to perfection.

"As such they married their equals—tailors, bootmakers, old clo' dealers, and rag and bone merchants—and they do not make a secret of the fact, they rather boast of it that education counts for nothing since their husbands, too, can neither read nor write and yet have made their pile." "It seems," said Miss Lehrer, "that their acquired wealth has certainly changed neither their character nor their manners, still less their appetites. For, in spite of having moved up in more fashionable quarters, with their ill-bred children, they are nothing but a nuisance to their better-class Christian neighbours, for whose feelings they take no consideration, but rather cause their more refined co-religionists to look for new quarters. Is it not awful?" "After all," said Miss Brunin, "they are only but the rabble, the scum of our race, these upstarts; they cannot deny their colours." "Yes," said Miss Lehrer, "what about our Christian neighbours? They do not know the difference, they do not know that these are only the gipsies. The man in the street does not know the distinction. After all, it is this

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class which is best known to them, on account of their brazen boldness—who, during the war, when everything looked so black, with the whole country in mourning, threatened by famine and defeat, these Jewish gipsies, regardless of the feelings of their fellow men, went about the streets displaying costly garments, expensive furs, and jewellery of all descriptions, and making themselves conspicuous through their vulgar and tactless behaviour.

“ We remember the onslaught of some of the newspapers on the Jews in general, while it was only these upstarts who were playing cards in the trains to Brighton and those other places where they used to go to during the air raids, with their overbearing wives, carrying the fowls from Petticoat Lane, some of them even plucking the feathers of the birds in the train with their heavily bejewelled fingers, making themselves objectionable to all the other passengers.

“ As I say,” said Miss Lehrer further, “ the men in the street knew them as Jews, and as such, naturally enough, they attacked us without discrimination. Their bitterness arose against the Jews in general. They altogether overlooked the many thousands of Jewish families who were bereaved of and mourning their sons, who had died for their country, who had given their best to save England in the time of need. They overlooked our poor brethren, the honest, straightforward, hardworking, Jewish working men, with their careworn, bloodless faces, toiling under terrible conditions, who contributed with their health to the wealth of the nation and suffered throughout the war by privation and lack of nourishment. They who remained behind during the air raids had to meet the onslaught ; even their taking cover was attacked.

“ Not less those Jews who are in more fortunate circumstances, men well known for their integrity, honesty, and thrift—men of excellent character, patriots, good, loyal English citizens, who, together with their fellow men,

worked hand in hand for the common good and welfare of the community. Not to mention the refined, cultured, noble class of English Jews, or men of great learning who have enriched English literature, and distinguished themselves in art and science, or Jews belonging to the various learned professions. Of these Jews the man in the street knows nothing," said Miss Lehrer, who seemed to be indignant. "What he did know about the Jews in that terrible time was what he saw in the street." "Oh, my dear Rose," said Miss Brunin, "you know very well that when you have a quantity of good apples in your cupboard nothing is known of them, except when you have a few rotten ones; they soon make themselves felt by their nauseous smell."

"After all," continued Miss Brunin, "each nation has its own dregs; if you look for bad ones, you will find them in all nations. It is true they did a lot of mischief, created a lot of enmity; but what will you have? They are an ignorant lot, and they ought to be treated with contempt."

"Very true," said Miss Lehrer, "but I wish the people outside would look on it in the same light. I wish I could make it known at the top of my voice in all the streets of London that these are not *the* Jews, but the pariahs. They are the scum of our race, the rabble of our nation, Jewish gipsies, moneybags without souls and without feelings. I simply abhor them, these upstarts, because they are a disgrace to our nation and a curse in themselves."

Miss Brunin was watching the girl, who was quite carried away by her feelings, and said, "All right, my dear girl, do not take it to heart. Perhaps some day some courageous person will have the boldness to point it out to the world and thus save the honour of Israel." "But what about the clergy, the leaders of the community?" asked Rose. "Is it not their place to point it out to them?"

“ I do not think they would dare to,” said Miss Brunin. “ Besides, who are the clergy ? The Shochet ? Chasan ? Mohel ? Reader ? They all call themselves clergy and wear the garb of clergymen, but most of them are ignorant, narrow-minded fanatics with little or no education, and the recognized clergy of the United Synagogue are quite satisfied with matters as they are ; and those who are not do not wish to be heroes and martyrs. They dare not stand up to point out the evils of their congregants. Besides, it would only cause more friction and division amongst themselves. It must be left to the layman who is not a paid servant of the Synagogue, to a person who knows them thoroughly, and at the same time has the welfare of the Jewish cause at heart.”

Miss Lehrer looked up at Miss Brunin and said, “ Who is more capable of undertaking this thankless task than you ? Who knows them better than you, who has worked so many years amongst them ? Who has had a better opportunity of studying them ? I am sure that you could write volumes about them.” “ It is true,” said Miss Brunin, “ so I could, but it requires a more competent person than myself, a person with greater experience and a deeper knowledge of human nature, a person who knows them from more than one side to co-operate with me, who can handle the matter in a more masterly way than I can. Not until then would I dream of undertaking such an arduous and most delicate task of such great responsibility. I assure you, my dear Rose, it is not an easy matter, apart from the many abuses and attacks which await me. But I do not mind it, so long as I serve a good cause.”

“ Now, Rose, and what about Mihma Esther’s meeting ? Have you decided to go ? I am sure she is a good soul. She is sincere and means well.” “ Oh, no ! Anna, I have nothing against her. She is an old-fashioned, very religious, and superstitious lady, which I even respect in her, but,

after all, she can teach me nothing and I can learn still less.

"I am convinced that if Mihma Esther were born a Roman Catholic, or even a Mohamedan, she would still be the same Mihma Esther, only worshipping different saints." "Undoubtedly," remarked Miss Brunin. "Besides," continued Miss Lehrer, "her saints do not interest me, nor do her martyrs, who, after all, can only prove they had a faith for which they died, but not the truth of it."

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE.

Mihma Esther Means Business.

AFTER that memorable visit to Mrs. Jacobs, Mihma Esther went home broken-hearted, both in spirit and heart, very much grieved at what she had heard at the Jacobs', and decided once and for all to call them together and put the case before them. All this had disturbed her mind, and had cost her many a sleepless night. The invitations had been sent out and the meeting has already taken place. For that which had happened during this special meeting we are indebted to Miss Brunin, who reported it to her cousin. We here put it before our readers as we received it.

The ladies came in large numbers and were all, with a few exceptions, attired in sombre coloured dresses with a marked absence of jewellery. While Mihma Esther was still absent, giving her final instructions to her maid, the ladies were discussing in a semi-whisper that they were eager to know the cause and were wondering what may have been the reason of the invitation, as Mihma Esther

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was not in the habit of having social gatherings at her place.

"I wonder if she will tell us of her birthday," remarked Mrs. Phillips. "Of course, I don't mind to contribute generously towards it." "And so do I," said Mrs. Trooper. "Never mind how much it will cost me," said Mrs. Falk, "Mihma Esther deserves it." To which all the ladies agreed.

But Mrs. Sonnestrahl looked a bit serious; she knew that Mihma Esther knew nothing about the present, which she had proposed to the ladies on her own initiative. When Mihma Esther returned to the room, the ladies were all taking their seats, as they were all eager to assure her that they had been very much impressed by the wonderful life of the great Tzaddik and that it had set them thinking about many a thing and that they were all of the opinion that there were not many such holy men nowadays; if there were, the Messiah would have come long ago. They expressed their wish that Mihma Esther might give them the pleasure of many more edifying evenings, which they would appreciate very much. Mihma Esther stood up and said:

"My dear sisters, I thank you most cordially for your presence to-day, whereby you have given me the opportunity to express my gratitude for the great appreciation which you have shown me in many letters concerning that evening to which you refer. It simply proves how eager you are to learn, how much you would like to know more about spiritual things. This very fact has caused me to call you together in order to put a very serious question to you, a question which concerns your own souls.

"I have realized since our last meeting how much you have to learn, and how much more you have to unlearn." The ladies felt a little uneasy and looked at each other. "In my last narrative concerning the Tzaddik, you will remember that I told you that each Jew or Jewess is constantly creating good or bad spirit according to their mitzwahs

or their sins. These, at the end of the year, in the fearful days, are entered into the Book of Chronicles in a kind of credit and debit account, the whole being reckoned up on Rosh Hashanah (New Year) as we have it in the prayer book. The result is sealed on the great Day of Atonement, and with it the fate of each individual soul for the next year, so far as this world is concerned.

"I cannot help feeling that some of our dear friends, whom I would have liked to have been present, have been called home, some in the prime of life, to meet their Creator ; quite smart, fashionable ladies they were.

"What their fate may be we do not know, but we guess." The ladies shivered. "Now, ladies," she said further, "my intention this evening was to point out to you that with death everything does not end, as you well know, but rather begins. This world is only a vestibule, a kind of outer court. Our life here, compared with eternity, is like a drop in the ocean. Our course will soon run out, because our days are numbered. A few years more, a few years less, sooner or later, we will have to go ; and only God knows how many of us may be missing at our next meeting."

The ladies again felt as if a cold perspiration was coming over them.

"As I have said, we will have to leave everything behind, and sooner or later we will have to go." Here she paused. "To go where ? That is the question. Sooner or later, your beautiful ball-dresses and expensive fur coats will have to be exchanged for cheap Tachrichem (shrouds). Your beautiful houses, with all the furniture and costly ornaments, will have to be exchanged for a wet, cold, dark grave. Your beautiful skins and complexions, artificial or not, on which you have spent so much time will be given over to the worms.

"Your nails, to which you have given so much care, will of their own accord grow like claws, to be manicured

by the demons. Your coiffure will turn into mockery ; your flesh will become corrupt and will go over in decay, a *table d'hôte* for worms and reptiles. Your children may remember you for a certain time, and sometimes not even this, but will cease in the second generation and you will pass into oblivion."

"What have you done on this earth," she asked in measured tones, "during your lifetime for your unhappy souls, and how are you going to meet the great day of judgment? What have you done for the salvation of your souls, and how do you think to escape the wrath of the just Judge? My heart is bleeding," she said with emotion, "when I see Jewish women act and live as if they would never die and have to give an account for all which they have done and left undone. This evening, particularly, I should like to remind you of that last gathering at Mrs. Jacobs', where Jewesses, some of you in all shamelessness, were glorying in your sins.

"Playing with sin, deadly sin, not realizing that you are only heaping condemnation upon condemnation for the day, for the terrible day which may overtake some of you when you least expect it. You are deliberately committing deadly sins for the sake of preserving your health. You do unlawful things in order to remain attractive and good-looking. Fools that you are, you cannot prolong a single day, you cannot preserve your health, your days may be cut off, the darkness overtake you suddenly just in the middle of your pleasure-seeking life, forgetting that all your pleasures, all your enjoyments may turn into grief, agony, and despair. That conversation of yours on that evening was so repulsive and heartrending that it caused me to call you together and speak to you concerning your vanity and how you gamble away your eternity for mere trifles of the moment. Do you think that you will live everlastingly? Do you think that God can be mocked? Why, your whole life is a mockery!

“Fancy Jewish mothers, probably from kosher fathers and mothers, should forget themselves to such an extent as to outrage every Jewish sentiment and feeling, nay, even all decency which pertains to a Jewish woman ! Think for a moment, mothers of children should appear in a public place half naked, their body shown out up till the breasts, with hair made up with the help of false hair, and should allow themselves openly to be embraced by another man, probably of another woman, and turn with him about the room, spinning like a top, to the noise of excitable music—what they call valseing ! Would you call this Jewish respectability, or Jewish dignity, as becomes a Jewish mother ? I call this degradation !

“I should also wish, although unwillingly, to touch upon a topic which you light-heartedly discussed, namely, the eating of pork. As if that would be the only means on which the very life depends ! Most of you have polluted your souls with that forbidden food ; you have got used to it, and you are not ashamed to own it. How deeply our Jewish women have fallen ! ” she exclaimed, sadly. “There was a time when Jewish mothers would rather undergo the greatest tortures, would rather die a thousand deaths, than even touch this forbidden food ; and you, I am ashamed to say, are eating it for the sake of lust and refined appetites, as becomes fashionable ladies.

“I will tell you something about a mother who sacrificed more than her beauty and appetite for the sake of her God, and what she underwent for refusing to eat this forbidden food . . .” And she read to them the story of the mother with the seven sons, as recorded in the books of the Maccabees.

“Well, my dears,” continued Mihma Esther, “let me tell you that these were not the only heroes who died a most cruel death for the sake of the religion of our fathers. We have had legions of heroes and heroines. I need not

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mention the Spanish Inquisition with all its diabolical instruments of torture, devilish inventions, and devices of all sorts, to intensify suffering, torture, and agony. But we need not go so far back as that.

“ You all know what our poor people suffered in Russia, under Nicholas the First. Little children of eight years of age, tender and helpless, were torn away from their mothers by the tens of thousands. These little heroes underwent all the possible torments when they tried to induce them to pollute their souls. Thousands died under the tortures of their tormentors. These inhuman monsters used to take the little ones to the vapour baths, where the heat was so intense that their skins got scorched and in some instances came off their bodies ; many remained there lifeless. If they would eat chazor ! But they refused, and there was no mother near them to encourage, to inspire them to die for their religion.

“ Here, as we have seen, a Jewish mother saw her sons beaten with cords, their bodies lacerated and bleeding from a thousand wounds, skinned alive, their tongues cut out and their limbs torn and roasted alive. If they would only have given way and tasted this abominable meat they would not only have saved themselves these untold sufferings, but be placed in high position. Yet they preferred death, and what a death ! And here,” she said in a choked voice, “ are Jewish women whom the Lord has helped, perhaps, for the sake of their pious parents. They go to fashionable doctors, pay them heavily in order that they should advise them to eat swine, which they are made to believe does them good.

“ What a farce ! What a mockery ! Nay, what a shame, and what a degradation ! How deep have fallen the daughters of Israel ! Think for a moment of the sufferings of this Jewish mother and her sons ; and that was because they did not want to eat chazor to pollute their souls. How

much greater will be your suffering, how much more will your torments and tortures be in hell for having eaten it? What excuse can you give—when you will be skinned, your limbs torn asunder, your tongues cut out, and you will be roasted alive, indefinitely? Oh!” she burst out in tears, “when I begin to think of the terrible punishment which awaits you, how each of your hairs will be turned into a poisonous serpent, eating into your very brain, your blood which you tried to heat through excitement will turn into liquid fire and will pass through your very veins, and your breasts which you exposed will be sucked by reptiles, and your tongues which you have used for flattery, calumny, and idle talk!”

Many women burst out crying, some were half hysterical, but most of them were trembling and begged of Mihma Esther to stop, not to speak any more personally.

Mihma Esther was silent. She looked pale and seemed to be agitated by an inner conflict, but remained silent.

The ladies were conscience-stricken, for there were a good many of them who had eaten pork, but had been less outspoken than those who ate it by the doctor's orders. They suffered. After a while they all calmed down somewhat, and Mihma Esther resumed her speech.

“You know,” she said, “when a Jew dies he is placed on the floor with the feet facing the door, covered up with a black cloth and surrounded with a number of burning candles, according to his means. Poverty and riches cease to count here, but the spirits he has created surround him. They may be good angels; they may be bad demons. You remember what the Tzaddick saw when the wicked man was carried to the cemetery; as also when the righteous man died, how he saw him surrounded by the Shechinah and legions of angels? After the body had been interred, we read that the angel Domah addresses himself to the corpse in Hebrew and demands his name; and if he does not know

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it, Domah splits open the abdomen of the corpse, removes the entrails and throws them into the face of the corpse, and leaves it to the howling demons who are watching for it.

“Every man must suffer because his soul must first be purified,” said Mihma Esther. “The soul receives a new body and it goes down to hell. Even the best Jew or Jewess must at least remain there for twelve months, with the exception of the month of Nissan, when all souls are at rest. Therefore, we Jews consider a person who dies in this month as being fortunate. On the way to hell the sinner meets the monstrous-looking demons of torture, when they scourge him with burning twigs.

“They throw him afterwards into a fiery mountain. From that mountain of fire he is thrown down into a valley of intense cold, where he gets frozen ; he is then thrown up again into the volcano. And this goes on for numberless times, from the extreme heat to extreme cold. But when he is a great sinner, those demons of torture stand separated from one another at a distance of twelve hundred miles ; and when the body is being hurled through this great distance from one demon to another, it encounters sixty thousand more of the most fearful demons, who in their turn each scourge it with burning twigs, and its sufferings are indescribable.

“After a time the sinner is ordered to descend into hell, where he remains twelve months—the most he can endure. . . According to the account,” she further said, “the length of hell is a distance of twelve hundred years’ wanderings, the width is four hundred years’ wanderings. Once the unfortunate one has entered the hell, there he loses himself. It is impossible to regain the door, for no sooner does he think that he is nearing the entrance than the poor soul finds to its horror that, instead of getting nearer, it is removed from the gate at a distance of four

hundred years' width and twelve hundred years' length. And so the poor suffering soul wanders about in hell for 33,333 years. But the righteous man who enters into hell finds the door as soon as his time expires.

"The fire of the Gehenna is six hundred times more intense than the heat of our earth, even when it is brought to the highest degree. The coals are as big as mountains, and near by is a river of brimstone, sulphur, and pitch, wherein the souls are plunged three times daily, to take a bath; since their newly-created bodies are indestructible, their pains and agonies cannot terminate with death.

"'Afcas Ruchel', a book which is a great authority in these matters, says that there are two kinds of hell—one an earthly one, the other in heaven. It is Ge-Ben-Hinnom. It is a sea of burning fire, poisonous liquids, prepared for those who have not kept Judaism. Everyone must pass through hell, in order to burn out even the smallest sin which he may have committed, since no impure soul can appear before the Holiest of the Holiest. There is also, as I have mentioned, a heaven and a hell, with a pestilential atmosphere, a sea of fire of many degrees, and the sinners are grouped according to their sins, and given over to the various demons and devils of torture to deal with.

"We find in the 'Talmud Messachta Gehinnom' that Rabbi Yesua Ben Levi ventured out once. He met the prophet Elijah, who descended to pay an earthly visit. 'After a while,' said the Rabbi, 'the prophet asked me whether I should like to see what it looks like in the Gehinnom. He would place me at the gate of it.' Oh! What terrible things the Rabbi saw there. Here are his own words as they are recorded in the Holy Books. He saw people hanging from their hands and feet, and their food consisted of burning hot coals; others were sitting about and living worms were eating their flesh. 'That is,'

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remarked Elijah, ' what the prophet Isaiah said, " the immortal worm or the worm that never dies." '

" Others are made to eat burning hot sand and many other terrible things of intense heat and intense cold. In our Talmud it is again recorded that Rabbi Akiba once met a deceased man who was carrying a heavy bundle of wood. When the Rabbi noticed it he inquired of the deceased man the reason for it. The unfortunate man answered that he had been adjudged that he should cut the wood daily with which he made his own fire in order to be burned. This process went on each day. He is created anew, roasted alive till he dies, and thereby is continually undergoing daily sufferings. Yes, my good women," said Mihma Esther, " many of these poor souls have been adjudged to undergo the sufferings of hell in a manner which no human being can describe, and often for what some of you may consider as petty little sins, sins committed out of necessity, as you say, quite insignificant ones, for which you easily excuse yourselves, such as for the sake of health to break the fast on the Day of Atonement, or the carrying of umbrellas and handbags on a Sabbath, the penalty for which is death.

" How many of you are particular with regard to the exact time of lighting the Sabbath candles ? How many of you are provided with a new tooth-brush on Passover ? And what about the tooth-powder and paste ? Not to mention the face-powder, which is distinctly chometz (unlawful), over which the law pronounced the death penalty.

" How many of you break the Sabbath day by making your toilet, when many hairs are combed out, which is equivalent to many trees being torn out, which means death to the transgressor ?

" Remember the man who only picked up sticks on a Sabbath, and whom our law-giver Moses ordered to be

stoned to death. And how many of you are leaving the making kosher of the meat to the shicksa, and allowing her to handle the wine, which thus becomes unlawful?

"Hundreds of such little sins, to which no attention is paid, are big enough each to bring upon you eternal condemnation. They become insurmountable mountains between heaven and hell. Poor souls, little do you know that these very neglected 'peccadillos' will hang on your necks like heavy stones and drag you down to perdition."

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR.

All is Well *if* it Ends Well.

THE ladies really seemed to be moved, and in great consternation. Some of them actually began to believe that little demons, with their ghostly faces, with their diabolical grimaces, horrible-looking creatures, actual infernal ghosts, were lurking about, and were ready to jump at them. They were afraid, as if their end was near and they were going to die; but none of them dared speak. Some were sighing deeply, others were continually wetting their dried lips, and some of the ladies were looking ghostly, with expressions of terror on their faces.

So they remained some time in silence. Suddenly relief came to many; they burst out crying, and for some time there was nothing heard but their sobbing. "Mihma Esther!" said one, "you do frighten us." "We were not prepared for this," said another. "What is it that you want us to do?" asked another. "We do not want to die yet—we are still young," some of them pleaded. "We

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are mothers of little children ; have pity on us ! ” “ Oh ! it is awful,” exclaimed another one.

“ I felt,” confessed another one, “ that the hair on my head began to stand up.” “ Oh, please do tell us something else,” they begged of her ; “ we are so frightened.” “ Tell us rather something to cheer us up,” others said. “ As we have heard so much about the terrible hell, and of the sufferings of the poor souls in the Gehanna, will you not tell us something about the Garden of Eden too ? Do, dear,” many begged of her, piteously. “ Yes, give us something about the Garden of Eden ; I am sure it will do all of us good,” was their opinion. “ Yes,” remarked others, “ it will be ever so much more interesting to hear about the happy ones, it will inspire us to become religious, and to become really better Jewish women. We implore you, do tell us about the Garden of Eden, and don't let us pass our nights in fear and agony.”

“ It will affect very much our health as well as our spirits ; it will cause us to have many a nightmare.” And so they went on beseeching her for some time, and at last Mihma Esther resumed her speech.

“ If you will remember,” she said, “ when I spoke about hell, I mentioned two kinds of hell, an earthly one and a heavenly one. I do not mean to imply by this that there are two different localities, but rather degrees. The same is with the sufferers. Some souls are suffering in a newly-created and indestructible body, others without it ; which may be compared for the sake of an explanation to material or bodily suffering and soul and mental suffering. The one pertains more to matter, the other to spirit.

“ Some seers have had a glimpse of the Gehenna, but what they saw was the earthly Gehenna, the lower region, the more materialized part, where the body suffers, not the higher region or heavenly Gehenna, where the soul suffers. The same is with Paradise. There are two de-

grees, a higher and a lower region, and each of them again has many divisions, according to the saints and their merit.

“ Rabbi Yesua Ben Levi said that the entrance of the lower region of the Garden of Eden, what we would call the material one, has two gates of rare precious stones, known by the name of ‘Cud-Cud,’ and at the doors stand legions of angels. When the Tzaddik approaches the gates of Paradise, they clothe him with a cloud of glory, and place a double crown on his head. And in his hands they place sweet-smelling myrtles, and they say with great rejoicing, ‘Chosen One, enter into the Gates of Paradise.’ ”

“ Every Tzaddik has a special canopy, according to his honour and worthiness. From the canopy run two streams from Aparsman and Hamshoar. Under each canopy stands a table made of brilliants and diamonds, and angels stand around it and say, ‘Go and partake of the sweetness of joys, because thou hast devoted thy time to the study of the Law. Drink of the wine which God preserved for His saints when He laid the foundation of the world.’ ”

“ Here in Paradise there is no night, but continual bliss. There are the divisions of time, if we may call it time. In the first, one enjoys all the happiness of the childhood, all his joys and delights are like those of a happy child. In the second, like a youth, he enjoys all the pleasures and joys of youth, and in the third, that of old age, he enjoys all the pleasures, all the peace which an old man can enjoy. In Paradise, in the smallest corners, there are millions of various trees, which produce the most gloriously perfumed spices, and a celestial choir of angels with heavenly voices chant the sweetest melodies.

“ In the middle of Paradise is planted the Tree of Life, which throws shade over the whole of Paradise, and in the Tree of Life there are 500,000 different delights of taste,

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and each taste differs from the other, as one aroma differs from another. Above this tree move seven clouds of glory. And from all sides there waves such a scented atmosphere as if from 100,000 various scents, and it is felt from one world to the other.

“ Under the tree the disciples of the wise men sit and expound the Law. Each one has two canopies, one consisting of the stars, the other of the sun and moon. Between each canopy there is a partition, a kind of a wall, consisting of clouds of Glory, and inside is the Paradise in which there are 310 worlds for each Tzaddik. . . We find in the Talmud that the prophet Elijah went once with Rabbi Bar Avuha to the lower region of the Garden of Eden. There he picked up a few leaves and put them in his clothes.

“ He heard a voice from heaven asking, ‘ Who has consumed his portion of the world to come, like Rabbi Bar Avuha ? ’ He got frightened and he dropped the leaves and went out without them. Still the smell of the clothes which had touched the leaves was so fine that he sold them for 13,000 gold pieces, which sum he divided amongst his sons-in-law.

“ We further read in the Holy Books of when an angel accompanied Rabbi Yesua ben Levi to Paradise (the Rabbi was in his body, of course) and also to the lower regions of the Garden of Eden. There the saints are banqueted with the finest courses and enjoy the greatest pleasures—of course, they are spiritual pleasures, as the food of which they partake is spiritual. But to the seer things became materialized and he saw only matter, and as such he describes it.”

Here Mihma Esther paused. She was exhausted, and the ladies did not insist upon tiring her more, because they could see that she did suffer, like all of them did, but the company was by now in a much better mood and it seemed that a new spirit had animated them.

After Mihma Esther finished about Paradise, the ladies felt somewhat livelier, but many of them were still under the trying effect which the meeting had upon them.

"I observed," said Miss Brunin, "that in the Gehinnom we met many ladies, but in Paradise there was a total absence of them." "That is just the terrible part of it," said one of the ladies, "which makes the thing ever so much worse."

"Mihma Esther!" some asked, "what is there to be done? What shall we do? Is there a way out? Perhaps we shall do more Mitzwahs? Also pay more attention to the little Mitzwahs as well?" "Yes," jumped up Mrs. Falk, "I feel that something ought to be done." Most of the ladies agreed with her. "But what?" "Yes, what?" "Mihma Esther, what shall we do?" "Repent!" said Mihma Esther slowly. "Perhaps we should open a place for Jewish mothers to attend, to teach them hygienics and how to feed their children?" suggested Mrs. Falk, who was supported in her views by Mrs. Sonnenstrahl. "What do you know about feeding children?" some of the ladies sneered at them. You leave this to us, who have children; first have your own!" The two ladies, who were childless, felt the rebuke very much, and Mrs. Falk was furious, but was interrupted by Mrs. Jacobson, who said, "Excuse me, ladies, I think that we are too late with that, there are already such societies in existence without us." "And I say," said Mihma Esther, "that it would be better to care more for the souls of the little children and see how many of the little boys are wearing the Arba Canfoth (four fringes), which is an important precept in the Torah, for it was the 'Tzitzis,' the garment with the fringes, which saved Daniel with his two friends in the lions' den. And what about your own little boys," she asked, "and husbands? Do you watch whether they wear the Arba Canfoth?"

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"Start with yourselves first." The ladies cooled down a little.

"Perhaps we should start a charitable society for giving away free tickets to poor Jewish women to go to Mikwah (monthly submersion)" suggested Mrs. Lieroff, to which many ladies agreed. "Yes, this is an important Mitzwah," approved Mihma Esther, "but charity begins at home. Start with yourselves first." Some of the ladies looked guilty.

"Perhaps we should make a society for supplying Tachrichem to the poor and needy ones?" suggested Mrs. Laichter. "Yes," this is a Mitzwah," agreed Mrs. Shipezki. "By my blessed life you are right," said Mrs. Shwatz. "I will give for that 5s. every month from my own pocket." "Oh! we are all willing to contribute to such a holy cause." All the ladies were ready to give to such a society.

"What do you say to that, Mihma Esther?" asked Mrs. Laichter. "It would be far better," answered that lady, "if you call in a scribe to look over the Tephillin, in order to see whether there is not a letter missing in them, in which case the phylacteries become unlawful; and the same applies to the Mezuzah at the door, in order to keep away the evil spirits from your homes." Another cold douche for our ladies.

"I would propose to the audience to open Jewish dispensaries," said Mrs. Phillips, "that our Jewesses should not have any need to go to the Missionary doctors," looking at Mrs. Drevosadski and Mrs. Shwatz, who both turned red. "And I should advise the rude young woman to learn better manners," retorted Mrs. Shwatz. Mrs. Drevosadski was in a temper.

"Not necessary," said Mihma Esther. "There are plenty of dispensaries without the Missionary; Jewish women need not go there if they do not wish to." They failed again.

"Or perhaps we should open an evening class for young marriageable Jewish girls," suggested Mrs. Taitelbaum, "to teach them the importance of how to keep a strictly kosher house." The ladies were delighted with the proposal and they all offered their services. They were looking at Mihma Esther.

"Sweep before your own doors first," said Mihma Esther, "and do not rely so much on your shicksas, who know of Yiddishkeit about as much as a parrot knows Zmirahs (songs which are chanted on a Sabbath day between each course)." "Perhaps we should boycott the Jewish milliners who keep open their shops on Sabbath," asked Mrs. Firebrand. "You are right, by my blessed life," agreed Mrs. Kratz.

And Mrs. Lieroff added, "It would serve them jolly well right! What do you say, Mihma Esther?" "For whose sake are they doing it? Who encourages them? Who supports them?" asked Mihma Esther. The ladies were at a loss how to find new Mitzwahs to escape the tortures of the Gehinnom.

"What then shall we do for the poor in order to save them? Judaism is falling to pieces; we cannot leave matters as they are," was the general opinion of the ladies.

Since Mihma Esther made no reply, but sighed deeply, Mrs. Cursman said, "Of course, Mihma Esther is right, we ought to start first with ourselves, because I know many Jewish women who buy trifah meat from a Christian butcher because it is cheaper, and they think they can make it kosher by putting it into water and salt, according to the Law," looking at several ladies meaningly.

"And I know of certain hypocrites," jumped up Mrs. Shnaps, supported by Mrs. Firebrand and Mrs. Taitelbaum, "who buy dear meat from a Jewish butcher and pay with trifah money and leave it to the shicksa to make it kosher."

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"Do you mean me?"—Mrs. Lieroff jumped up from her chair as if bitten by a scorpion.

"What about your daughter going to the goieshka restaurant to eat trifah?" "You bad lot what you are, mind your own business, you spies!" "Ah! the cap fits you," sneered Mrs. Phillips. Mrs. Cursman was seething with rage, but was interrupted by Mrs. Patking, Mrs. Goldstone, and Mrs. Biberpeltz, who were seemingly also hit by it. "And what about letting your shicksa wash up your plates with soap?" "It is a lie!" cried Mrs. Phillips, "a d—n deliberate lie! But what can I expect of a lady who was a factory hand?" she hurled at Mrs. Patking, who turned pale. "Of course," Mrs. Patking screamed back, "what can I expect of you, the daughter of a Galician Yachna" (Galician Rag)? "And yes," threw in Mrs. Goldstone; "and what about letting the shicksa use the same dishcloth for milk and meat plates?" looking at Mrs. Phillips.

"It never happens in my house," snapped Mrs. Creepinger, "but I know some Jews who have no other time to go to the theatre than on a Friday evening, and come home not in their own car, but in a taxi," looking hard at Mrs. Goldstone. "I could not help it," jumped out Mrs. Shnabelowopski, "that my husband was taken ill." "And what has that to do with you?" asked Mrs. Drevosadski in her turn. "But your mother is too ignorant to go to the theatre, unless it is to crack nuts there."

"My mother is ignorant?" screamed Mrs. Creepinger, "eh?" "But not as common as you are, you charwoman that you were before you married!" Mrs. Drevosadski was furious. "Who were you?" she hurled back with venom. "Who does not know you and your father, the horse thief, who had to run away from Russia, because, otherwise, he would be imprisoned?"

"As for that," said Mrs. Shwatz, who was joined by Mrs. Shipeski, Mrs. Taitelbaum, and Mrs. Shaitelmacher, "we do not know anybody from where they come and what they were in Poland, Russia, or Galicia. They all were nobodies." "What! you dare to insult me," screamed Mrs. Goldstone, "and what about you, you Lithuanian thief?" "What was your husband? My father says he was a carman, and here he is a Government contractor. Ha! ha! I must laugh."

"You will laugh for the last time, I hope," retorted Mrs. Shwatz. "And what about your precious brother, where is he, I should like to know?" "In prison for stolen goods," burst out Mrs. Lieroff. Mrs. Goldstone began to scream and became hysterical. "As for prison," said Mrs. Schifferblatt with emphasis, "nobody is yet sure of being out of it."

"You are right," said Mrs. Shnabelowopski, supported by Mrs. Leibowitz. "I did not mean you," screamed Mrs. Lieroff. "Then you mean us," screamed Mrs. Schifferblatt, Mrs. Shnaps, and Mrs. Firebrand.

"What can you expect of these mean Cracover misers?" sneered Mrs. Katzenallanbogen. "You shut up," retorted Mrs. Laichter. "It is a case of the pot calling the kettle black," added Mrs. Lieroff.

In the meantime, at the other end of the room, Mrs. Falk and Mrs. Sonnenstrahl were fighting it out with Mrs. Paisterman and Mrs. Trooper, and were joined by Mrs. Croupnick and Mrs. Biberpeltz, all at the top of their voices washing their dirty linen; whilst Mrs. Drevosadski, Mrs. Shipezski, and Mrs. Leibowitz were calling one another names and throwing insults at one another, and Mrs. Phillips, with Mrs. Cursman and Mrs. Patking, revealed each other's secrets.

The uproar was great; they were screaming and howling at each other. The room turned into a real pandemonium, as if the demons of hell had been let loose.

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Poor Mihma Esther stood there, pale and aghast, with her hands pressed against her head, helpless and hopeless.

Miss Constance Theresa O'Brien, the future Deborah Leah, was speechless and bewildered.

Miss Brunin alone remained calm and collected.

The final result of that memorable spiritual, or rather spirited, meeting of the aristocratic ladies of the Ghetto, we may tell our Readers when we next meet again, under happier circumstances, which we hope will be soon.

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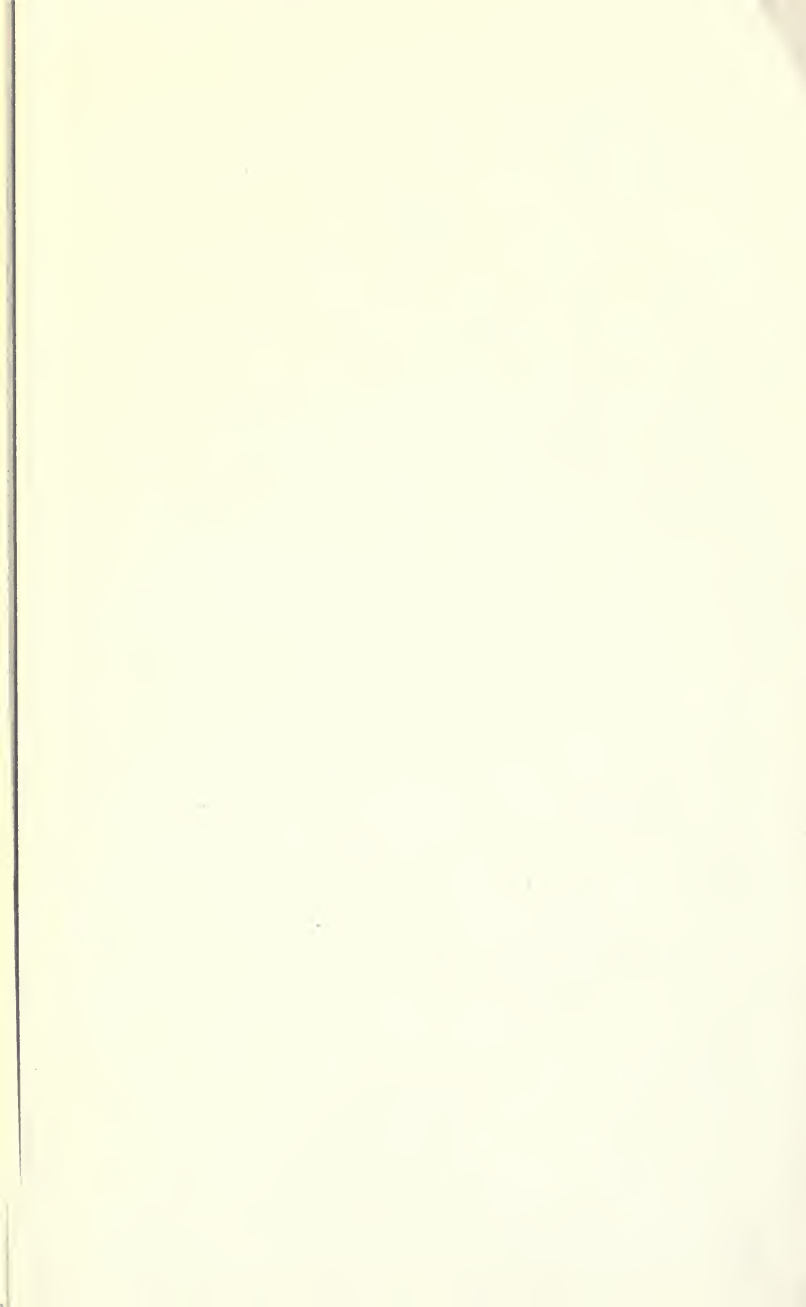
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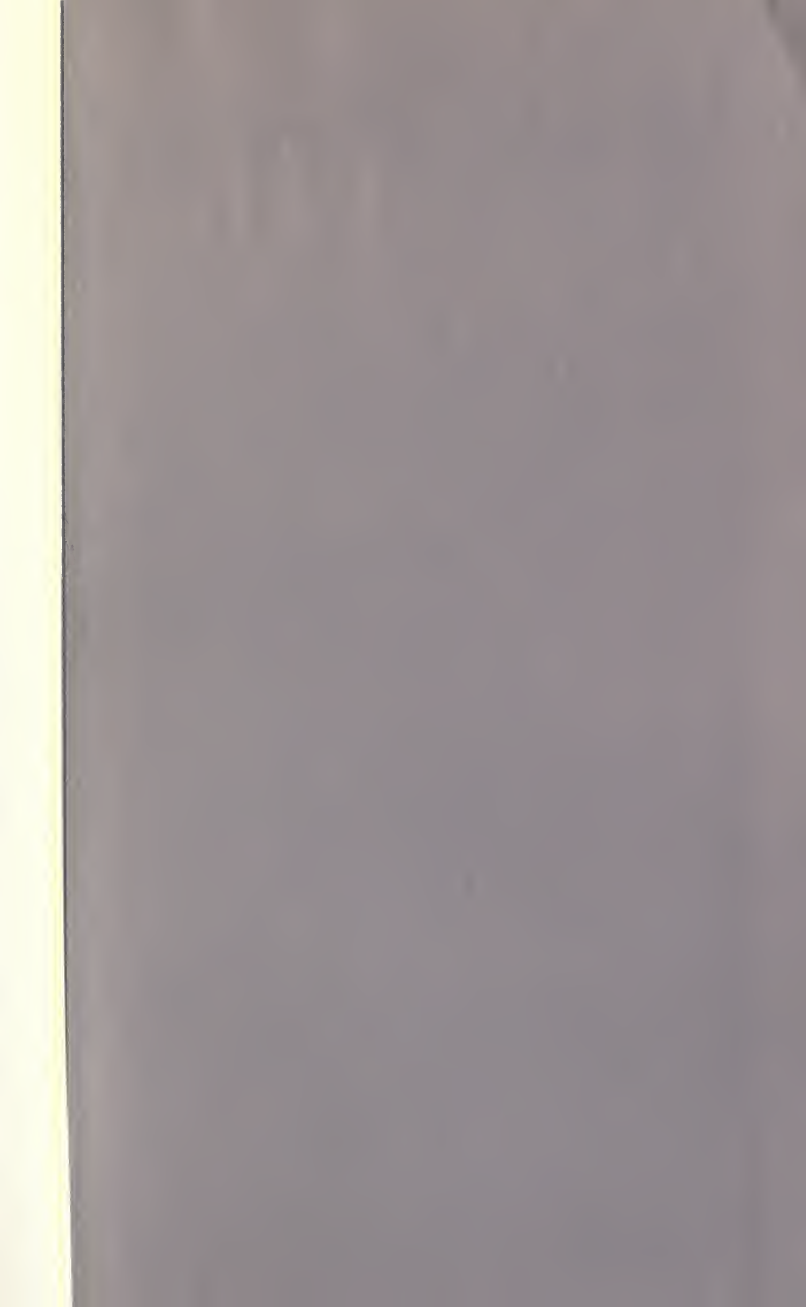
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